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UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES
UTILIZED BY NEBRASKA MUSIC EDUCATORS

by

Phillip K. Hesterman

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Music

Under the Supervision of Professor Robert H. Woody

Lincoln, Nebraska

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UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES
UTILIZED BY NEBRASKA MUSIC EDUCATORS

Phillip K. Hesterman, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2011

Adviser: Robert H. Woody

The purpose of this study was to examine kinds of professional growth activities employed by music teachers in Nebraska schools.

An internet-based survey was administered to the population of Nebraska K-12 public and parochial music educators ($N = 1,144$), out of which 456 responded. The survey gathered data related to respondents' past professional growth participation, projected involvement, opinions about and preferences for such activities, as well as information concerning perceived barriers to professional growth.

A review of literature focused on various factors related to professional growth in educators. This review provided insights into professional growth opportunities utilized by music educators in various locations. Most literature reviewed reflected new perspectives on what professional growth means for educators in the early decades of the twenty-first century.

The study findings yielded insight into the state of professional development among Nebraska music educators. Continuing education and local in-services were the professional growth choices most commonly reported. Lack of money and lack of time were frequently mentioned as barriers to the pursuit of professional growth. Continuing education and professional conferences were highly preferred, although the nature of these activities is short-term. Teachers with less teaching experience had a higher

tendency to pursue professional growth than veteran teachers. Results indicated no statistically significant difference in likelihood of participating in professional growth by gender, highest degree held, grades taught, teaching certification area, or location identified by Nebraska State Activities Association District. Short-term professional growth opportunities are sought with greater frequency, even though the literature suggested that long-term activities have a more long-lasting impact.

Study results indicate music educators face issues that confront their professional development. Such issues include frequent changes in technology, availability of funding, and shifting student demographics. The viability of music education in the public's perspective and the idea among some educators that professional development is optional are additional challenges. Relevant professional growth activities are needed that are prototypical, yet malleable, and designed to improve instruction and student learning as they shape lifelong learners.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Problem Statement

Teachers expect students to grow in their understanding of subject matter in order to achieve mastery of concepts. Teachers are charged with planning and executing lessons to enhance student learning (Robbins, Burbank, & Dunkle, 2007). It should follow that educators would desire to find that which stimulates their professional growth in order to better serve their students; however, this is not always the case. “Ultimately, for the professional development of music educators to be considered a success, it should positively impact the learning of students” (Bauer, 2007, p. 20). Unfortunately, teachers are not always pursuing professional growth activities in order to keep pace with the best practices in education. This is evidenced when one notices that the professional development of teachers, including music teachers, is at times limited to attending in-service workshops, professional conferences and seminars rather than attending those growth opportunities that will have a lasting impact on their teacher, and, ultimately, on the learning of their students. “Research indicates that the profession is not always making connections between research and practice in terms of professional development” (Hammel, 2007, p. 22).

Society and education are changing at a swift pace, making worthwhile professional development unconditionally vital for music educators (Ester, 2007). The undergraduate education that music teachers receive before beginning their teaching careers is the foundation upon which they build their careers (Conway, Hansen, Schulz, Stimson, & Wozniak-Reese, 2004). Professional music teachers will need to continue

their professional development beyond the undergraduate degree in order to be maximally effective for their students throughout their professional lives (Kassner, 2009; Stegman, 2001). Teachers' roles are transitioning from deliverers of knowledge to facilitators of student learning in order to be effective in today's classrooms. Furthermore, there is a need for teachers to effectively incorporate constantly developing technology to be a successful teacher in a rapidly changing technology-savvy society (Bowles, 2002; Welker, 1991; Spearman, 2000). Most music educators face mandated district-level or building-specific professional developments. These requirements, in addition to their personal professional goals, necessitate the music educator's consideration of a variety of factors in deciding which professional development opportunities they pursue (Conway, 2007). Teachers must consider financial rewards, scheduling implications of professional development opportunities, state licensure requirements, teacher retention and advancement, curricular demands, and personal development of teaching skills as they consider options for professional development (Bowles, 2002).

Preservice teachers experience growth through their college methods courses, various field experiences, and student teaching (Barry, 1996). As new teachers establish their careers, they find themselves consumed with day-to-day activities as they work in their schools. Taking advantage of professional growth opportunities may seem overwhelming to new teachers in their early years of teaching; however, opportunities for professional growth are within reach. Hilary Apfelstadt (1996) stated:

...we cannot deliver a “final product” teacher in any amount of time.

There is simply too much learning that occurs in the field while teachers struggle or succeed with a myriad of challenges.

What we can do, however, is provide a framework for continued learning and growth, and encourage these new teachers to remain open to development (p. 4).

Experienced teachers play an important role in modeling how one grows as professional music educator with guidance and encouragement, providing opportunities for the novice teachers to learn from those are experienced in the field (Campbell & Brummett, 2007). At one time, these veteran teachers were preservice teachers and new teachers. These master teachers changed and grew through the years, integrating skills, attitudes, knowledge into their teaching that they had learned along the way. Growth counters stagnation and opens doors of renewal and opportunity throughout a teacher’s career (Bauer, 2007).

Numerous teachers continue to teach in the manner they were taught, which can be positive or negative, depending on the individual (Thompson, 2007; Kassner, 2009). Negatively speaking, some teachers do not change their instructional technique throughout their careers because they continue to teach the same way year after year, which generates a lack of effectiveness of their teaching habits and shows a disconnect with the practices of a master teacher. On the positive side, there are teachers who teach in a manner that seems natural to them, engaging in effective teaching behaviors that were gleaned from contact with master teachers (Thompson, 2007). Because music is experienced and made in somewhat different ways than in the past, there are teachers

who feel threatened because they and their curricula have not kept pace with the changing times. Gone are the days when families would routinely gather in the living room to make their own music. The communal aspect of music making is relatively unknown for students in the music education classroom of the twenty-first century. The current state of affairs shows that the average music student is more of a consumer of music rather than an active participant in the making of music outside of the music classroom. As Kratus (2007) illustrates, music experiences in school are often disconnected from students' musical experiences away from school. Professional growth and development for music educators can be employed to assist teachers in the field so that they may stay informed on current issues and trends in music education (Bauer, 1999).

Teachers who continue to learn throughout their careers soon realize that they are constantly acquiring new knowledge and skills that will assist their students in the classroom (Webster, 1999). Good teaching practices are often defined according to those practices that we have found to be successful. When the educator incorporates learner analysis and reflection into teaching, and not only the acquisition of knowledge and imitation, the educator learns through the reflecting on the learning process, thereby enabling the educator to discern what the students know, can do, and value about music (Teachout, 2005). John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer, proposed the idea of *flexible purposing* that still has implications for today's music educators (Dewey, 1938/1963). Eisner (2004) explained flexible purposing this way:

Flexible purposing is opportunistic; it capitalizes on the emergent features appearing within a field of relationships. It is not rigidly attached to

predefined aims when the possibilities of better ones emerge. The kind of thinking that flexible purposing requires thrives best in an environment in which the rigid adherence to a plan is not a necessity (p. 6).

Schmidt (2010) described Dewey's thinking this way: "Dewey claimed that all genuinely educative experiences involve a similar undergoing, or reconstruction of prior learning, and he emphasized the importance of reflection for creating meaning from experience in a way that fosters continued learning" (p. 142).

The work of flexible purposing is seen in a teacher's facility to perceive emerging relationships and to act on them to further the learning process. Perceptive teachers have honed their skills through experience and observation, being attentive and mindful to what is happening in their classroom and seizing the opportunities presented to make the best teaching happen, whether or not it was planned. That is the charge of flexible purposing. Society has changed and, in turn, the educational needs of young people have changed (Kratus, 2007). Although teachers can draw on a fixed foundation of educational philosophy, a changing society demands that they also continually adapt their teaching methods.

Learning is assumed to take place when individuals are placed in educational settings. In order for teachers to continue learning, state departments of education can prescribe certain expectations of the educators within their boundaries. These expectations often state what kind of learning opportunities teachers need to utilize in order to retain their licensure to teach within that state. The State of Nebraska requires all public school districts to subscribe to Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Rule 10, Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools. The current reading of Rule

10 states that “each teacher participates in at least ten hours of staff development activities each year” (NE Title 92, Rule 10, Section 007.07A, p. 25). Rule 10 does not specify the content of the ten hours of staff development activities, nor does it specify the delivery mode for these activities. As Sissel (2003) notes, “It is unclear how many school districts provide systematic, results-based professional development to their staffs...The critical need for ongoing, individualized professional development cannot be fulfilled by a mere ten-hour requirement during the school year” (pp. 3-4).

Although local school districts may be supplying the required ten hours of professional development activities for their general teacher base, it was the purpose of this study to determine how music educators in Nebraska were addressing their individual professional development requirements.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the kinds of professional growth activities employed by music teachers in the schools of Nebraska. Further, this study sought to determine what kinds of professional growth opportunities music teachers feel they need to function as professional educators who are capable of dealing with the complexities of music education in the 21st century.

Nebraska has a diverse assortment of schools scattered throughout its 93 counties. The largest high school in the state, Omaha Central High School in Omaha, boasts a student population approaching 2,600, whereas the smallest high school in the state, Sioux County High School in Harrison, has a student population of just 33 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Frequently, Nebraska school districts have multiple music teachers, although various school districts in the state have one music

teacher for the entire district, Kindergarten through Grade 12. School buildings are comprised of various age groups, not always uniformly. Elementary schools in some communities contain Kindergarten-Grade 5, while others contain Kindergarten-Grade 6 or Grade 8. Middle schools, where they exist, are customarily comprised of students in Grades 6-8. High schools in the state are primarily Grades 9-12; however, there are schools that combine the junior high school or middle school with the high school in one building, such as Adams Central High School near Hastings (Grades 7-12) or Grand Island Central Catholic School (Grades 6-12). Due to the variety of educational settings in Nebraska, it may be that the professional development needs of teachers in Nebraska are different from teachers in other regions of the country.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- (1) What professional growth experiences—such as journal-keeping, conference attendance, mentoring, observation, continuing education, in-services, and graduate study—keep music teachers in Nebraska engaged and learning throughout their professional lives?
- (2) What do Nebraska music teachers perceive to be barriers to their professional growth?
- (3) How do Nebraska music teachers define worthwhile professional growth opportunities?
- (4) Are the professional growth choices of music teachers related to the years of experience of the music teacher?

(5) Does the area of teacher certification, the area of teaching assignment (general, choral, instrumental), or grade level assignment have an effect on the kind of professional growth choices made by music teachers?

(6) Does age, gender, highest degree held, or NSAA District location impact Nebraska music teachers' professional development choices?

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, the definition of professional growth will not be limited to workshops and presentations, although these are often viewed as the primary source of professional growth for music teachers. Rather, the operating definition of professional growth will be expanded to also encompass mentoring, journal writing, observations, college graduate classes (Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts, n.d.). Furthermore, the terms *professional development* and *professional growth* will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

While teachers have extensive formal training, including four or five years of college classroom work, practicum experiences, and student teaching, teaching is a profession that requires constant and ongoing learning in order to stay viable and productive in reaching students. Fullan (1991) expands the definition to include “the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one’s career from preservice teacher education to retirement” (p. 326).

Bearing in mind that the meaning of professional development in the technological age may need to be viewed differently, Grant (1996) suggests a more encompassing definition of professional development that includes the use of technology to promote teacher growth:

Professional development ... goes beyond the term ‘training’ with its implications of learning skills, and encompasses a definition that includes formal and informal means of helping teachers not only learn new skills but also develop new insights into pedagogy and their own practice, and explore new or advanced understandings of content and resources. [This] definition of professional development includes support for teachers as they encounter the challenges that come with putting into practice their evolving understandings about the use of technology to support inquiry-based learning.... (p. 72)

For practicing educators, professional growth opportunities have been considered necessary in order to address requirements imposed by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. This legislation was an amendment of Title II – Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The purpose of the legislation has at its heart the increase of student academic achievement, accomplished through quality teaching. This legislation states that professional development would include a variety of activities that accomplish the following:

1. improve and increase teachers’ knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified;
2. are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans;
3. give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement

standards;

4. improve classroom management skills;
5. are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom; and
 - (A) are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences;
6. support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;
7. advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are
 - (A) based on scientifically based research (except that this subclause shall not apply to activities carried out under Part D of Title II); and
 - (B) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and
8. are aligned with and directly related to
 - (A) State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and
 - (B) the curricula and programs tied to the standards described in Subclause (a) except that this subclause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (2) and (3) of Section 2123 (3)(b).

9. are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;
10. are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;
11. to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach;
12. as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;
13. provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs.
14. include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and
15. include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and may include activities that

- (A) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish school-based teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;
 - (B) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under Part A of Title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licenses teachers; and
 - (C) provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in Subparagraph (a) or another clause of this subparagraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.”
- (Nebraska Department of Education, 2005)

The various possible professional growth activities designated by this legislation are focused on the recipients and the product of the educational process: the students. Enabling teachers to become highly qualified in their field will benefit the students in reaching higher academic goals, while partnering with parents and administration in programs that are edifying for the students and the school community at large. It should be noted that activities are also recommended for teachers of limited English proficient children, as well as for teachers of children with special needs. Professional development opportunities in the area of technology are timely and would need to be frequently revisited due to the steady change in classroom technology. The list is a mere guideline

for numerous opportunities.

The legislation for NCLB specifically states that events such as one-day conferences and workshops do not qualify as professional development, as was noted in the earlier description of the NCLB legislation. Such one-day conferences and workshops tend to be the norm for many music teachers' professional growth agendas, mostly because teachers perceive that these are the only choices available to them (Conway, 2007). Conway, Albert, Hibbard, and Hourigan (2005a and 2005b) stated,

We as a profession may need to re-think our idea of what professional development really is. Is it about a one-day "let's get pumped" experience led by "experts" in the field, or can we expand our experiences to be more meaningful? What about developing sharing communities of arts teachers who, as the real experts in many cases, get together to problem solve and exchange ideas? What about ongoing, regular workshops for arts educators, where progress and change is shared among the group? Somehow, we need to get beyond "token" days or hours of sharing good ideas and move toward meaningful experiences where the voice of the teacher and the effects on students are being discussed and felt. (p. 8)

Delimitations

Kindergarten–Grade 12 music teachers in the public and parochial schools in the State of Nebraska Music teachers participated in this study. Participants were identified through the Nebraska Music Educators Association's 2010 membership directory and through a listing of music educators downloaded from the Nebraska Department of Education's website, since not all music educators in the state are members of the

Nebraska Music Educators Association. Email addresses for these educators were retrieved from the 2010 membership directory of the Nebraska Music Educators Association and from school districts' websites. The survey was constructed utilizing an Internet survey tool entitled *Survey Monkey*, which allowed electronic responses by the participants.

Because the survey was administered via the Internet, respondents were expected to have the technological competence necessary to complete an online survey. Those participants with limited technology skills may not have been able to complete the survey. An alternate form was not available for respondents.

Results were dependent upon the number of responses from music teachers who completed the survey. Also, the results of the survey relied on the truthfulness of the participants about their own professional growth opportunities and needs.

Basic Assumptions

The basic assumption of the study was that the survey was reflective of the true manner in which Nebraska music teachers utilize professional development. Teacher professionalism is improved by reflecting upon personal and professional growth (Burkett, 2011). In addition to enlightening the practice of teaching, professional reflection can lead to increased participation in professional activities (Robbins, 1994/1995). Change in classroom practice occurs over time through ongoing and systematic professional development—through programs that bring teachers together regularly throughout their careers to keep them informed of continuing developments in the field and to enable them to test and evaluate their own best practices as well as those of other teachers (Killion, 1999).

Theory

This study focused on Nebraska's music teachers in order to understand what kinds of professional growth opportunities music teachers in the state utilize to realize their professional growth needs and desires. This study was similar to that of Bowles (2002), who studied a state in the upper Midwest. Andrews (1978) stated that to improve teaching "there must be development of the teacher as a person, instructional improvement, and enhancement of the organizational system" (p. 136).

Teacher education programs best serve the profession by producing teachers who view themselves as lifelong learners (Welker, 1991; Robbins & Stein, 2005). It is not possible to teach the preservice teacher everything in college that will be needed throughout the person's teaching career (Teachout, 2005). Bowles (2002) conducted a study to determine the felt professional development needs of music teachers. The results reported that most music teachers feel that the summer school setting of several days/weeks of class would be more to their liking, as long as the classes are applicable to their teaching situations.

Kratus (2007) observed that educational practices in music have become unmoored from educational practices in other disciplines (p. 45). Kratus proposed "the nature of music education should reflect the cultural and social milieu in which it exists" (p. 46). In order to reconnect with educational practices in other disciplines and to reflect the cultural and social milieu in which music education exists, music educators will need to avail themselves of various opportunities for professional growth.

Tarnowski and Murphy (2003) conducted a study regarding recruitment, retention, retraining, and revitalization among elementary music teachers in Wisconsin

and Minnesota. Respondents to their survey indicated that professional development came in several guises, namely additional certifications, such as in Orff or Kodály, teaching with technology, assessment in music, and standards-based teaching (p. 25). Tarnowski and Murphy (2003) suggested "...the role of mentoring relationships between K–12 teachers and their students as well as new teachers and experienced teachers is in need of investigation in further studies. This should be part of the larger agenda of the research community that addresses issues of teacher recruitment, retention, and revitalization" (p. 26).

This study was also designed to be familiar with the influence various teacher-related aspects might have on the professional growth opportunities pursued. Teacher-related aspects included the teacher's area of teaching assignment (general music, vocal music, or instrumental music), the subject area in which the teacher is certified to teach, the number of years the teacher has been teaching, the highest degree held by the teacher, the teacher's preference of growth opportunities, and gender. Professional growth opportunities included continuing education, in-services, journal-keeping, professional conferences, mentoring, observations, and graduate studies.

Recognizing that various factors may impede the teacher's growth path, the study examined the impact of particular barriers on the teacher's desire to take advantage of professional growth opportunities (Kassner, 2009; Fermanich, 2002). Barriers included for consideration were lack of school district support, family obligations, lack of money, lack of time, distant location for growth opportunities, lack of incentives to pursue growth opportunities, lack of available courses, lack of administrative support, and staff discouragement.

See Figure 1 for a diagram showing the mapping of these concepts.

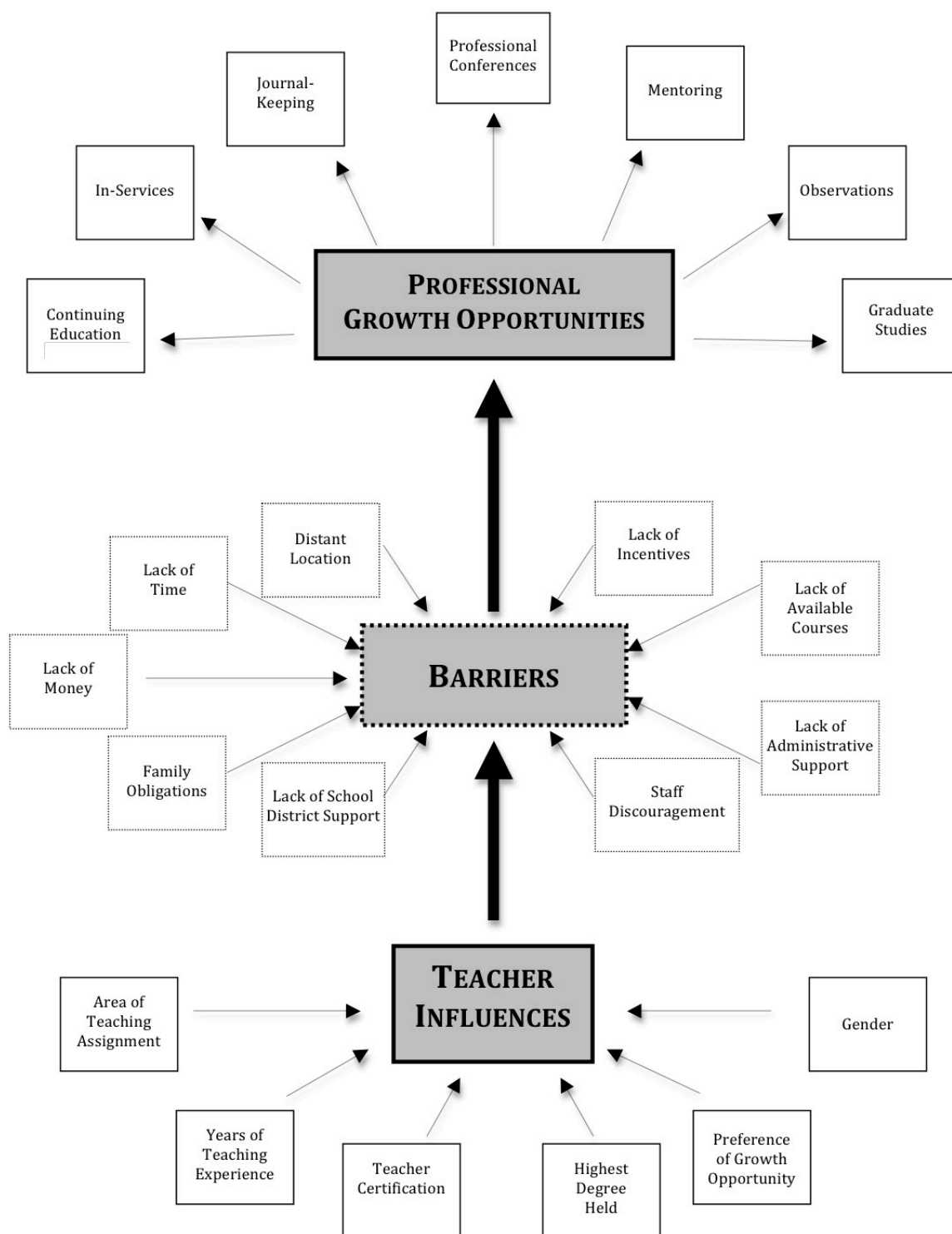


Figure 1

Factors influencing a music teacher's choice of professional growth opportunities

Teacher-Related Aspects

This study sought to determine if the teacher-related aspects mentioned above are associated with the types of professional growth opportunities realized by Nebraska's music teachers. The influential factors outlined below address why professional growth choices are made and how the respondents understand professional growth.

Area of Teaching Assignment. Bauer (2007) notes, "Professional development preferences may be related to the specific teaching responsibilities and the area of music in which one teaches, with appropriate, directed professional development experiences needed" (p. 14). Nebraska's music teachers are certified in one of four areas of endorsement by the Nebraska Department of Education, depending on the teacher's training. The areas of endorsement are a K-12 Field Endorsement, K-6 Vocal/General Music, K-12 Vocal, and K-12 Instrumental. The K-12 Field Endorsement certifies the teacher to teach general music, vocal music, and/or instrumental music at any grade level at any school in the state. This study examined whether the area of assignment (general music, vocal music, or instrumental music) had an impact on the choice of professional growth opportunities.

Additionally, teachers are assigned to teach various grade levels. Teachers were asked to identify which of the following grade levels they taught, with the possibility of more than one identifier being selected: Kindergarten-Grade 5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12, and *Other*. Those who chose *Other* were asked to specify what grades they currently teach.

Previous studies of music educators' professional growth experiences have not addressed such a wide range of educators. Bowles (2002) studied music educators in

Wisconsin who taught in all areas, although all were members of the Wisconsin Music Educators Association. Tarnowski and Murphy (2003) surveyed only elementary general music teachers in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Years of Teaching Experience. Campbell (2007) conveyed that teachers need to be learners throughout their careers. Good teaching practices must be defined according to current educational thought. Learning that incorporates learner analysis and reflection and not only acquisition of knowledge and imitation, along with teacher analysis and reflection, is more active in nature and addresses various learning styles. Continued professional growth is needed in order to reflect the “current and emerging sociological, psychological, and philosophical perspectives” (Campbell, 2007 p. 26).

Field and Latta (2001) reinforced the idea that the primary task for teacher education should be “to help prospective teachers be in touch, intimately related with the processes of actual experience, such that they learn to be open to their experience, to be radically undogmatic—in touch with self, others, and the character of the circumstances in which they find themselves” (Field & Latta, 2001, p. 2). While experience is gained through the application of factual knowledge in the classroom, it can also come through an openness to come into contact with new things out of the realm with which one is familiar. Field and Latta note that a skilled teacher is not only one who has become knowledgeable through practice but also one who remains open to new experiences.

Highest Degree Held and Teacher Certification. This study examined whether the highest degree held by the teacher would affect the choices made in professional growth opportunities. Respondents were able to choose from Bachelor’s Degree, Master’s Degree, Doctorate, or No Degree. Borman and Rachuba (1999) dealt with the topic of the

kind and number of degrees held by a teacher in a study that explored the distribution of teacher qualifications and professional growth opportunities.

Typical measures of teacher qualifications have included highest academic degree earned, state certification or licensure, test scores, and years of experience. Increasingly, researchers have investigated issues related to “out-of-field teaching,” assessing whether middle and high school teachers hold a college major or, at minimum, a minor in the specific subject area(s) they are responsible for teaching. All of these measures serve most directly as indicators of how well teachers are prepared and/or qualified to teach. They are measures of both the overall level of teachers' training and of their specific content knowledge. (Borman & Rachuba, 1999, pp. 367-368)

Preference of Growth Opportunity. This study examined the preferential choices in professional growth opportunities made by teachers. Previous studies, such as those by Bowles (2002) and Tarnowski and Murphy (2003), examined the preferences of members of music education associations in Wisconsin and Minnesota. In describing Bowles' study, Bauer (2007) states:

The top professional development topics of interest to the respondents, with the percentage of individuals selecting each topic provided in parentheses, were (a) technology (66%), (b) assessment (57%), instrumental/choral literature (53%), (c) standards (45%), (d) creativity (43%), and (e) grant writing (38%) (p. 12).

Regarding the Tarnowski and Murphy study, Bauer (2007) notes:

Nearly all of the teachers (97.5%) stated that they engaged in professional development. In addition, the respondents ranked the following

professional development activities, with the percentage of individuals selecting each activity provided in parentheses, as ones in which they'd participate in the future: Orff (61.21%), teaching with technology (60.5%), assessment in music (55.88%), standards-based teaching (50.53%), Kodály (46.26%), world music approach (45.55%), interdisciplinary approach (44.84%), and Dalcroze (29.18%) (pp. 13-14).

The results of either study probably cannot be generalized to the greater population of music teachers in the country because of the limited geographic focus and those surveyed were members of their respective state's music education association (Bauer, 2007, p. 14).

Hammel (2007) describes the need to examine the preferences of music educators when examining choices made regarding professional growth activities:

Researchers have stated that most professional development experiences are too short, contain too few instructional hours, involve too little active participation, have too few specific goals, and are often crisis oriented. Educators are asking for opportunities that fit their individual needs and deliver instruction according to their preferred learning style or modality. They are also searching for meaningful professional development, and many are aware this will require more than the in-service workshops they have been provided in the past. They know they will benefit from active, rather than passive, participation in professional development opportunities that they choose themselves and that are consistent with their specific classroom goals and objectives (p. 27).

Gender. Many research studies include gender as an independent variable.

Thompson (2007) posits that gender in education can add to the formation of beliefs about teaching and learning. By using gender as an independent variable in this study, it may be determined if men and women vary in their preferences toward professional growth.

Barriers

Educators face a range of impediments or barriers as they seek to reach personal goals in teaching and in professional growth. In this study, barriers considered were lack of school district support, family obligations, lack of money, lack of time, distant location for growth opportunities, lack of incentives to pursue growth opportunities, lack of available courses, lack of administrative support, and staff discouragement.

Lack of School District Support. Whether this support comes as financial coverage for professional growth opportunities, release time from one's teaching assignment, or verbal encouragement, teachers find that the support of their local school district is important to pursuing professional growth (Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Poulson & Avramadis, 2003; Hunt, 2009).

Family Obligations. Some teachers, due to obligations to their immediate and extended families might choose to forego professional growth opportunities in order to spend more time with their families (Spearman, 2000; Kassner, 2009).

Lack of Money. Some teachers seek funding for their professional growth through their school or district, while others must bear the financial burden on their own. In either case, the teacher might not pursue professional growth because the school or district will not fund the teacher's attendance, or it could be that the teacher cannot afford to have the

cost covered by their personal bank account (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Bauer, 2007; Hunt, 2009).

Lack of Time. The timing of professional growth opportunities may or may not favorably align itself with the music teacher's personal schedule. Music teachers are not able to absent themselves from their students too many days because of limited release time from their schools. Alternately, teachers find their summers to be a time to do other things than school matters. The year is full of activity, and teachers may hesitate to relinquish some of their personal time to pursue professional growth (Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Poulson & Avramidis, 2003; Haack, 2006; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008).

Distant Location for Growth Opportunities. Teachers living in parts of the state that are not necessarily close to professional growth centers might find it difficult to travel to professional growth events because of the distance involved. Teachers living in Scottsbluff, for instance, would travel 400 miles to attend an event held in Lincoln, such as the annual Nebraska Music Educators Association In-Service Conference/Clinic. Distance translates into travel time, mileage, transportation, and sometimes involves overnight lodging accommodations (Walls, 2008; Burkett, 2011).

Lack of Incentives to Pursue Growth Opportunities. Motivational incentives are important to teachers in many areas, including professional growth. For some teachers, the incentives to attend professional growth events are realized in various ways, including salary increases, verbal recognition, or advancement toward tenure. If the incentives are lacking, the motivation to pursue professional growth may be lacking as well (Geringer,

2003; Knapp, 2003; Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Boyd, Goldhaber, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2007).

Lack of Available Courses. Graduate courses in music education or supplemental teacher education courses are offered by colleges and universities according to their respective schedules. Teachers seeking additional education in their field or in related areas of study may or may not find their particular course(s) offered within their personal time frame. For teachers in a masters program or a doctoral program, the course of studies for the individual is customarily mapped out; however, if the teacher is taking classes *à la cart*, they may not find a course that meets their needs at the given time (Webster, 1999; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Dall'Alba and Sandberg, 2006; Kassner, 2009).

Lack of Administrative Support. Tied closely to school or district support is the administration's support of the teacher's professional growth endeavors. Through verbal encouragement and directives, the administrator(s) can help shape the music educator's future in the school, furthering the music educator's success. Not all music educators feel that their administrators support their professional growth endeavors; therefore, because professional growth is not encouraged or supported, it does not always take place (Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Tarnowski & Murphy, 2002; Abril & Gault, 2006; Haack, 2006).

Staff Discouragement. Music teachers are often isolated in their work sometimes because they are the only teacher in their discipline in the building. While the math teacher or the reading teacher might frequently attend professional growth events in their discipline, it might be seen as unusual when the music teacher desires to attend a

professional growth event. Due to staff discouragement, disapproval, negative peer pressure, and similar negative attitudes an educator sometimes faces in the school environment, some music teachers do not pursue growth opportunities in order to avoid disparaging remarks (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Goodnough, 2001; Poulson & Avramidis, 2003; Haack, 2006).

Choices of Professional Growth Opportunities

Based on the teacher related aspects, this study will seek to determine if there is a relationship between these aspects and the type(s) of professional growth opportunities that Nebraska music teachers choose.

In-Service Training Programs. These are sometimes optional/self-chosen or required, depending on the school district. Customarily there are in-service programs that are presented according to subject area. There are occasionally the specialized techniques in-service training programs, as well as the generic issues in-service programs. This study sought to determine what benefits music teachers are able to draw from their local in-service training programs (Burkett, 2011; Garcia, 2004; Borman & Dowling, 2008).

Journal-Keeping. Strand (2006) describes that in keeping a journal of one's teaching episodes, the music teacher will be able to track when new or different educational practices have been implemented, tracking their implementation in order to determine the impact of the new practices on their teaching. Hourigan (2006) wrote that journaling is a way of practicing reflective teaching, whereby the teacher is enabled to self-examine and reflect upon one's teaching. Reflectively-rich material can feed future positive educational experiences for students (Krueger, 2001; Linek, Fleener, Fazio, Raine, & Klakamp, 2003).

Attendance at professional music conferences. Conferences sponsored by the Nebraska Music Educators Association, the Nebraska Bandmasters Association, the Nebraska Choral Directors Association, the Nebraska Music Teachers Association, and any other professional organizations to which the teacher might belong can have an impact on the teacher's professional growth and development. Whether through simple attendance or if the educator serves as a presenter at such a conference, learning can take place, which will hopefully have an impact on the teaching that occurs in the classroom (Killian, Baker, & Johnson, 2005; Bauer, 2007).

Mentoring. When teachers mentor one another, the mentor and the mentee benefit from the exchange of ideas and information (Tillman, 2003; Haack, 2006). In the position of the mentor, the music educator might be questioned by the mentee why things are taught or done in a given manner, thereby requiring the mentor to reexamine the reasoning behind what is taught or done.

Observation. Observation is a customary tool that administrators use to evaluate the teacher, the classroom, and the overall learning environment of the school. Through supervision and observation, it is desirable that appropriate feedback be given to the music teacher in order for improvement to take place (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2002; Knapp, 2003).

Graduate-level classes. Numerous teachers teach their entire careers with only the bachelor's degree they received upon completion of their undergraduate education. While some teachers do go on to get advanced degrees (master's degrees or doctoral degrees), other music teachers take graduate-level classes in order to satisfy tenure requirements, to

satisfy a personal desire, or to keep current on educational practices (Bowles, 2002; Scott-Kassner & Kassner, 2001).

Significance of the Study

This study was designed to understand how K-12 music teachers in Nebraska's schools utilize various avenues of professional growth. While studies have been done with music educators in other states, the researcher felt the need to evaluate how music educators in Nebraska are taking advantage of professional growth opportunities. Due to Nebraska's lack of standards for music education and a lack of an operational state music curriculum framework, the music curriculum in each locale is open to various wide interpretations and executions. This disparity could be reason for teachers who transfer to another school district to take advantage of professional growth opportunities that will enable them to align their teaching with their new district's expectations. Another curious aspect is the state's population density. Nebraska's estimated population in 2009 was 1,796,619, which placed it 38th overall in the United States.

The two metropolitan areas of Omaha (390,000), and Lincoln (225,600), encompass just over one-third of the state's total population, with the other two-thirds of the population spread throughout a state that ranks 16th in size in the country. Because, for the most part, the larger school districts are in the eastern third of the state where Lincoln and Omaha are located, teachers in outlying areas might not be able to take advantage of the same opportunities as their counterparts in the eastern third of the state. Because of the sparse population in the western two-thirds of the state, music teachers are sometimes employed to teach classes from kindergarten through grade 12 or kindergarten through grade 8, serving as the teacher for instrumental music, vocal music, and general

music, making it more of a challenge to find suitable professional growth activities to satisfy their quest for information to better deal with their student populations.

The information gleaned from this study will prove helpful to the various professional music educator organizations that operate within the State of Nebraska, so that they might plan for additional or better professional growth opportunities for music educators in the state.

M. R. Hookey (2002) asserted that the ultimate beneficiaries of professional growth are the students:

The ultimate assessment of professional development rests on the influence that teacher learning has on the students in the classroom. The life histories of music educators teach us that experiences both inside and outside the formal teacher education setting affect a teacher's practice in the classroom. The provision of formal professional development activities can make a difference to student achievement. (pp. 897-898)

The information from this study will also be beneficial to local school districts that sometimes struggle with how they on a local level can meet the professional growth needs of their music educators. Teaching training institutions within the state will also find the information useful in addressing life-long learning issues with their undergraduate students.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review selected references, literature, and current research related to the professional growth of music teachers. The body of literature related to professional growth and development for music teachers is wide-ranging. A number of studies were reviewed, along with articles that are more general in nature. Because the topic of professional growth in Nebraska's music educators has not been dealt with in the literature, the focus of the literature review for this study encompassed studies from other states and professional journal articles related to professional growth for music educators. Furthermore, the topic of professional growth and development is of concern to the larger community of educators, which allowed the latitude to delve into other disciplines for additional background on how other content-area teachers consider professional growth.

This study was designed to gain an understanding of the professional growth opportunities that are utilized by Nebraska's music educators, identifying the kind of particular experiences in which music teachers in Nebraska are engaged. The examination of several factors helped to better understand the professional growth choices made by Nebraska's music educators, including years of experience, age of the teacher, the area of teaching assignment, the subject area for teacher certification, gender, the NSAA District in which the teacher is located, and the highest degree held by the music educator.

This chapter will be divided into several sections to examine literature related to professional growth: (a) historical background for professional growth in music education, (b) preservice music teacher education, (c) how practicing music educators view professional growth, (d) kinds of professional growth evidenced among educators, (e) professional growth expectations from state boards of education, and (f) the future of professional growth opportunities for music educators.

Historical Background for Professional Growth in Music Education

The singing school tradition, present in colonial America and in the early years of this country, came about through attempts to improve singing in the churches already in the 1720s (Teachout, 2007). As singing schools gave birth to singing societies, the societies offered conventions “to provide instruction to those who wanted to teach music” (Mark & Gary, 2007, p. 217). Various music conventions comprised the so-called convention movement of the nineteenth century and provided training for hundreds of future music teachers. Coffman (1987) noted that early music teacher training in the United States “varied from an average of six weeks, twenty minutes a day, at the summer institutes to an average of twenty weeks, thirty minutes a day, at the two-year normal college” (p. 102).

It was common for regular classroom teachers to serve as music teachers, working under a music supervisor for their school district (Birge, 1988; Mark & Gary, 2007). “Toward the end of the nineteenth century, normal schools began to train music teachers, and the colleges and conservatories developed interest in public school music” (Mark & Gary, 2007, p. 227). During the early decades of the twentieth century, the music curriculum expanded in American public schools with the addition of various

instrumental and vocal ensembles to the curriculum (Birge, 1988; Mark & Gary, 2007). Throughout the decade 1910-1919, support for music education in the schools increased overall, with more and more teacher education programs offering instruction in music methods (MENC, 2007). By the mid-1920s, a curriculum for music teacher preparation grew from this impetus—a curriculum that emphasized three major areas of study: (1) general education ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the curriculum), (2) professional education ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the curriculum), and (3) music ($\frac{1}{2}$ of the curriculum) (Mark & Gary, 2007, p. 323).

Throughout the twentieth century, music as a curricular subject became more specialized and the regular classroom teacher became less influential in music instruction. It became common practice for music instruction to be provided by the music specialist who needed particular training to the discipline (Birge, 1988; Mark & Gary, 2007). Music education programs at colleges and universities trained more people as music specialists to fill the demand in the schools. But, as will be noted, preservice music teacher education programs were still left wanting.

Preservice Music Teacher Education

Teacher education courses at the undergraduate level provide a basic preparation, but they cannot provide all of the necessary expertise that the future music educators will need to employ throughout their careers. In the mid-twentieth century, a then-recent college graduate noted that the college education he received was only the beginning of a lifelong process for music educators.

...we go into the teaching field and the world at large as mere novices. We have been provided with only a minimum of the fundamentals of teaching and musicianship, and have been exposed to other subject areas to a

degree which barely enables us to sense the existence of points of view different from our own. As novices, our basic education is adequate only as a foundation for growth toward ever-increasing competence in teaching, in music, and as human beings. (Riddle, 1958, p. 64)

A number of practices can encourage preservice music educators to pursue professional growth throughout their careers. Webster (1999) offers this insight into the preparation of music teachers to be lifelong learners:

[This is not only about] preparing music educators for their first day, week, or year, but about preparing them to view music education as a life-long profession that requires continual reevaluation of practice informed by experience, research, and philosophical teaching.” (p. 179)

The process of “birthing” new teachers, as Webster calls it, must address a balance between musicianship (performance) and practical tools (the how-to of teaching). Among these practical tools is learning to engage in reflective practice.

Standard 9 of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards notes the need for reflective practice: “The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally” (Council of Chief State School Officers’ Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 2010, p. 19). Brouwer & Korthagen (2005) affirmed how future music educators used reflection as noted above; however, “reflection is not necessarily a cognitive strategy that comes easily to preservice teachers” (Bauer, 2003, p. 9). Consequently, preservice teachers need numerous occasions to

engage in reflective practice (Bauer, 2003). Chaffin and Manfredo (2010) related that while reflection focuses on past teaching episodes, the preservice teacher is expected to concentrate on actions within the episodes with an eye toward future instruction. Teachers should be encouraged to reflect in the moment of action (teaching). From this perspective, classroom situations do not present themselves as prearranged but are constructed from events that are mystifying, troubling, and uncertain (Schön, 1983).

The portfolio is a tool that can be used to display accomplishments at many levels, including written reflections. Artifacts collected for the portfolio serve as documentation of “a person’s skill and growth in an educational program and a career. This tool can be valuable for practicing and prospective teachers alike” (Hill, 2008, p. 61). Berg and Lind (2003) noted “the process of developing portfolios can help preservice teachers better understand the complexities of teaching, make connections between classroom learning and field experiences, and develop into flexible and reflective practitioners” (p. 18). “Portfolio developers then reflect on the artifacts, articulating their thinking about each artifact in relation to the goals of the portfolio” (Bauer, 2003, p. 12). Evidentiary material for undergraduate portfolios may be collected from courses and from field work or practicum experiences and student teaching.

While in the undergraduate years, preservice music teachers experience various practicum and student teaching experiences, somewhat like an apprentice. Apprentice-type situations can forge collegial bonds, impressing upon the undergraduate students the positive results that can be found in mentorships and can provide a proving ground for reflective practice. Using the theory of *situated learning* proposed by Jean Lave and

Etienne Wenger (1991), Conkling (2007) advocates the idea of apprenticeship for preservice music teachers.

According to Conkling, teacher preparation should include significant field-based experiences, especially in the early stages of learning to teach. Situated learning consists of access to exemplars of music-teaching practice, engagement in productive music-teaching activity, and collaborative reflection. Conkling states that the idea is not that the preservice teachers are to perfectly replicate the teaching style and practices of the experienced teachers; rather, the preservice teachers are to take what they have learned and transform it for use in their own classrooms. This process, sometimes termed *occupational socialization*, has a considerable influence on the development of graduates' in-service competence, above what their typical college course work was able to provide, establishing networking opportunities for in-service educators, university instructors, and the undergraduate students. (Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005).

Conway, Hansen, Schulz, Stimson, and Wozniak-Reese (2004) related accounts regarding music teachers new to the teaching profession. Wozniak-Reese's observation is key: "Getting a degree does not mean that we have 'arrived' as professional educators; it's just the beginning of a longer journey" (Conway, Hansen, Schulz, Stimson, & Wozniak-Reese, 2004, p. 46). Additionally, "...there is only so much your professors can do to prepare you for teaching and only so much theory you can learn before you actually have to put it into practice in your own classroom" (Conway, Hansen, Schulz, Stimson, & Wozniak-Reese, 2004, p. 46). Conway notes that the transition from music education student into the role of professional educator is complex, yet it is one that all educators must undergo.

Conkling (2002) described how the partnership between preservice music education students and their cooperating teachers can be effective when the students ask pertinent questions “about problematic situation that occur, examining these problems in light of known theory, seeking contextually appropriate solutions, and analyzing their effect” (p. 10). This can be particularly helpful as the preservice teacher begins transitioning into the professional world.

As the preservice music education student moves through music education courses, as well as through various practicum and student teaching experiences, it could be anticipated that these educational activities facilitated the development of the music teacher identity within the student (Pellegrino, 2009). The undergraduate institution and the various cooperating teachers can assist the preservice teacher in transitioning from an existence as a student and performer into the role of teacher. Hunt (2009) stated that “members of the higher education community should accept the responsibility to better prepare preservice music teachers for the realities of urban and rural music programs by understanding the perspectives of music teachers, administrators, and parents from those environments” (p. 35).

Service learning is one facet that preservice music teachers can utilize for their betterment while they are still undergraduates, thereby preparing themselves for future collegial encounters with other professional music educators and with their communities. In service learning,

Students respond to a community’s articulated need(s), apply what they are learning in the classroom to a real-world setting or problem, reflect critically during and after engagement, celebrate their accomplishments

with members of the community, and—ideally—emerge with a new or renewed sense of commitment to continued civic engagement (Burton & Reynolds, 2009, p. 18).

As a result of service learning opportunities, Burton and Reynolds (2009) noted that those preservice music teachers involved in the study felt that they had increased confidence from the experiences. Most of the preservice music teachers noted an enhanced commitment to music teaching. This kind of learning opportunity directly addresses InTASC Standard 10: “The teacher collaborates with students, families, colleagues, other professionals, and community members to share responsibility for student growth and development, learning, and well-being” (Council of Chief State School Officers’ Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 2010, p. 20). Burton and Reynolds (2009) “suggest that service-learning partnerships might encourage transformations of music teacher understanding and responsiveness” (p. 30).

Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) stated, “New teachers may need to through an adjustment period where they learn the craft of teaching along with adjusting to the other aspects of an initial job” (p. 448). Additionally, a number of teachers new to the profession discovered that they were not well matched for teaching and subsequently left the profession within the first few years (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, p. 448). The first five years is a critical period in teachers’ careers, when mentoring and collaboration would be well-suited in assisting new educators through the transition from the undergraduate environment into the professional world (Campbell & Brummet, 2007; Borman & Dowling, 2008). “Discovering the ways in which preservice, internship, and professional development experiences can be structured to help teachers during the

crucial first 5 years is a critical research, policy, and program development initiative for the future” (Borman and Dowling, 2008, p. 399). Through the mentoring process, preservice students gain understanding from their veteran counterparts in matters such as musical learning and classroom discipline (Campbell & Brummett, 2007; Conway, 2007).

The undergraduate education experienced by preservice music educators should, in due course, foreshadow their future life as professionals in the field. Preparation for a lifetime of learning and growth is the responsibility of the undergraduate institution and the various cooperating schools and teachers with whom the preservice music educator comes in contact. While the purpose of these institutions and personnel is to prepare preservice music educators, the task of realizing that goal ultimately belongs to the preservice music educators as they move into the profession (Si Millican, 2008; Conway, 2007; Strand, 2006; Scheib & Burrack, 2006; Miceli, Sobol, Makowski, & Mergen, 2006).

How Practicing Music Educators View Professional Growth

John D. W. Andrews (1978), citing the work of Bergquist and Phillips (1975), noted three major aspects of academic life are addressed with regard to improvement in teaching: “there must be development of the teacher as a person, instructional improvement, and enhancement of the organizational system that provides the environment for the first two” (Andrews, 1978, p. 136). Some teachers hesitate to deviate from their ingrained behavior due to previous experiences, fearing that departure from their “normal” might be too far afield. Teaching, and the effort to improve it, involves the whole person (Andrews, 1978). Jenlink and Kinnucan-Welsch (2001) stated,

“Professional development is about change: change in individuals, their perspectives and personal theories, and their practices” (p. 716). As noted earlier, teacher education programs best serve the profession by producing teachers who view themselves as lifelong learners. “The world and its classrooms have always been changing. Effective music educators respond to these changes imaginatively, preserving the best of tradition while pressing forward with new strategies for reaching and teaching young people (Smith & Haack, 2000, p. 29).

Andrew Garcia (2004) surveyed music educators in Massachusetts’ public schools in order to ascertain what these music educators were doing in the way of professional growth. According to Garcia, music teachers have specific, unique professional development needs that differ from the broad population of subject-matter teachers. For that reason, Garcia feels that school districts ought to provide professional development that is context-specific for music educators. Taken as a whole, the responses to the survey support research indicating that professional development opportunities offered by schools and school districts do not often match the actual ongoing needs of music teachers. Despite knowledge and a desire for the contrary, school districts in Massachusetts appear to offer short-term, broad-based opportunities rather than professional development as a process that takes place on a continual basis within the teaching setting and context. Teachers have had to seek opportunities on their own, apart from what the schools and school districts offer.

Through research done in the past several decades, it has become evident that teacher professional development needs are not all the same. Bauer (2010) described the situation this way:

Teachers' preferences for professional development appear to be related to the specific teaching responsibilities and the area of music in which they teach. It seems logical that the professional development interests and needs of the band director, general music teacher, choral educator, and string specialist would differ in at least some areas. It also appears that professional development needs may vary according to the stage of a teacher's career (p. 38).

Bowles (2002) found that most music teachers feel that the summer school setting of several days/weeks of class was more to their liking, as long as the classes were applicable to their teaching situations. Tarnowski and Murphy (2003) indicated that professional development came in several guises, namely additional certifications, such as in Orff or Kodály, teaching with technology, assessment in music, and standards-based teaching. Bauer (2007) noted that many in the profession view attending conferences and membership in professional organizations as professional growth. However, Bauer also noted that the research available on these facets of professional development indicates that this assumption may deserve closer examination (Bauer, 2007, p. 19).

Bauer (2010) noted that while teachers might prefer the short-term professional development experience for the sake of convenience, researchers have learned that extended experiences are more beneficial. "Professional development seems to have a greater impact when it is ongoing, rather than concentrated, and when it involves a substantial commitment of time" (Bauer, 2010, p. 38). Bauer also stated that music educators frequently regard casual, interactive professional development over the more

formalized, structured development opportunities. Hammel (2007) shared similar findings regarding informal professional development experiences:

Killion (1999) found that when educators in outstanding schools are asked to describe their professional development activities, they discuss formal experiences (i.e., conferences, workshops, and graduate coursework and degrees); however, they consider the informal learning experiences (i.e., mentoring, collaboration, active research, portfolios, observing students and educators, supervising student educators and working with university educators, writing grants, writing curriculum, writing action plans, and presenting sessions and research) to be the most effective forms of professional development. (Hammel, p. 30)

Young teachers look for connecting points to fend off feelings of isolation that tend to be part of the beginning teacher's experience (Bauer, 2010; Benson, 2008; Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005; Webster, 1999; Strouse, 2003). Such a connecting point can be established through mentorships that are carefully planned (Benson, 2008; Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008). Veteran teachers have also benefitted from such connections, establishing relationships among faculty members (Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008).

According to what has been evidenced above, teachers appear open to professional growth opportunities that are informal and provide some kind of connection with other colleagues. While short-term experiences might seem favorable due to their concentrated focus and low amount of time invested, the research points to the beneficial experiences as being more long-term in nature.

Kinds of Professional Growth Evidenced Among Educators

In research across professions, the development of professional skill traditionally has been seen as a process of accumulation of knowledge and skills, promoted by practical experience, progressively acquired by passing through developmental stages, such as novice, competent, and expert (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006). Dall’Alba and Sandberg stated that a focus on stages veils or conceals more fundamental aspects of professional skill development, and research on professional development.

Beerens (2000) described effective ways for principals and teachers to work together for the teachers’ growth and the ultimate benefit of students’ learning, using an approach that incorporates constructivist teaching, the findings of educational research, reflective practice, and techniques for self-assessment and peer coaching and evaluation.

John Kratus (2007) stated that music education must not only transmit the best of the knowledge and practices of our past, but that music education must also keep up with the changing musical culture in society. Lieberman and Mace (2008) described how the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 now dominates professional development in schools around the county. Retooling and reinstructing current music teachers is needed to adequately address curricular needs in music education. Various avenues of professional growth have been found to assist teachers in closing the gap between the way they were taught and the way they could teach in order to better reach today’s students. However, Burkett (2011) issued a caveat regarding the impact of NCLB on professional development for music educators.

Prior to this act, the PD [professional development] of music teachers was governed primarily by the state departments of education and local school

districts that accepted a wide variety of educational opportunities for relicensure and/or continuing education credits. The language of NCLB indicates, however, that state licensure administrators must more closely examine the scope and content of all PD offerings to ascertain if these offerings focus on making teachers more “highly qualified” within their subject areas (p. 2).

Burkett (2011) further described how various music educators have pursued graduate (master’s) degrees in order to meet the classification of *highly qualified* as defined by the NCLB Act. Yet, when these teachers have attained a master’s degree but have no desire or intent to pursue a doctoral degree, they are left with little to do in the area of professional development, especially in rural areas where professional development opportunities are offered infrequently (Burkett, 2011). Teachers are engaged in various kinds of professional development, whether or not their pursuits fall under the description of the NCLB Act. “Anecdotal evidence suggests that although music teachers may desire the acquisition of additional musical content during graduate study, they most often seek the skills to become better communicators of the musical concepts and skills that their students need” (Si Millican, 2008, p. 76). Scheib (2006) stated that many teachers sought an advanced degree because the additional degree would help advance the teachers’ professional growth, and it would result in an advancement on the pay scale.

Teachers are increasingly engaged in professional growth through distance learning experiences (Greher, 2007). Such urgings came already via the Housewright Symposium (Spearman, 2000). Some teachers have used distance learning in order to

prepare for state teacher licensure and certification, as described by Greher (2007). The U.S. Distance Learning Association states, “distance education refers specifically to learning activities within a K–12, higher education, or professional continuing education environment where interaction is an integral component” (Holden & Westfall, 2006, p. 9). To that end, music teachers have used distance learning to take additional course work asynchronously, yet still able to interact with instructors and other participants (Walls, 2008). Ruth Reynard commented on how this form of delivering instruction is becoming more commonplace:

While we are aware that distance learning means mediated instruction that is delivered via technology, we are not fully aware of how distance is becoming more ‘usual’ than optional and what that means for education and teacher training. Distance is also becoming more about mobility than simply scheduling flexibility or physical distance. New mobility capabilities challenge instructional design in all areas from content form and format to mediating technology to delivery technology and, ultimately, to distribution (Reynard, 2008, p. 2).

Not all teachers venture into distance learning for their professional growth. Others stay close to their home territory through mentoring, a process whereby an experienced teacher can assist a novice or new teacher. “Formal induction and mentoring programs for new teachers also provide social capital and a potential policy lever for lowering attrition in the profession” (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton & Freitas, 2010, p. 80). Both formal and informal mentor/mentee relationships have been found to be beneficial (Bauer, 2010).

For preservice teachers, cooperating teachers can fill the role of mentor (Krueger, 2006). Krueger (2006) wrote that cooperating teachers found themselves examining their own teaching and classroom practices in working with their preservice mentees. This mutually beneficial experience can then be repeated in later years when the preservice teacher is in the profession and takes on the role of mentor (Krueger, 2006). Campbell and Brummet (2007) described the relationship in this way:

Mentoring for professional growth rests on empowering prospective teachers to think about expanded ways of engaging in music and in pedagogy. This approach acknowledges the perspectives preservice teachers hold about teaching and learning music, but it also encourages preservice teachers to go beyond their initial ideas (p. 50).

Johnson (2004) described how the pressure on new teachers is enormous, whatever their age or prior experience. Along with insisting that schools must shelter new teachers through either a less demanding load in some fashion, Johnson also counseled that schools create some kind of structure for professional orientation, support collegiality, and keep teachers motivated by offering professional growth opportunities. Additionally, Haack (2006) stated that mentoring programs designed for music teachers should employ “targeted programming, combined with same-level, same-field mentor guidance” (p. 60). Such a carefully designed relationship can assist novice music educators in learning what pitfalls can be avoided and how success can be attained. In order to establish such a successful relationship, one must look at establishing future reflective practitioners. By this means, the mentor helps construct a thought pattern in the mentee that invites future growth through inquiry, reflection, and self-examination

(Thiessen & Barrett, 2002). On the other hand, it should be noted that in sparsely populated areas, another music teacher may not be readily available to mentor a novice teacher.

Preparing college music education students to find their own mentors could help in cases where a new teacher is in an isolated circumstance or does not have access to a formal program. Teaching these new professionals that good mentors can include teachers outside their subject-matter specialty might be wise (Fredrickson & Burton, 2005, p. 34).

Often times, mentoring is focused upon retaining teachers in the field, especially in the first five years of teaching. “Music educators are awarded a K–12 certificate, licensing them to teach in all areas of music and at all grade levels. Responsibilities in administration and public relations add to an already difficult transition to the classroom” (Jacobs, 2008, p. 62). Mentorships are one method of easing the transition for the novice teacher, employing the expertise of a veteran educator; however, for the benefits from the experience to be fully realized, the process should last several years and should be defined with clear goals and structure for the collaboration (Hammel, 2007; Jacobs, 2008).

Good mentoring practices are assumed to transpire when exemplary, veteran teachers are employed as mentors; however, exemplary teachers are not always exemplary mentors. As Tillman (2003) explained, first-year teachers deserve to be paired with a mentor who is willing to work with them, with the principal monitoring the process to ensure a successful pairing that will result in a mutually beneficial relationship for mentor and mentee alike.

Engaging in meaningful discussion in the mentor-mentee relationship is valuable. Having each partner in the relationship in the classroom setting is imperative (Jacobs, 2008). Meaningful discussion and planning, along with observing others teach and being observed by others, bring new topics for meaningful discussion beyond the mentoring relationship (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Observing and being observed assist educators in engaging in reflective discussions about the goals of a lesson, the tasks employed, teaching strategies, and student learning (Bauer, 2010; Krueger, 2006; Kindall-Smith, 2004).

Administrators and student teacher supervisors use observation to determine how a teacher or a student teacher is doing in the classroom (Burton & Reynolds, 2009). Moore (1996) listed six teacher competencies: knowledge of curriculum areas and the learning context, planning for pupils' learning, management of pupils' in the classroom, assessment and evaluation of pupils' learning, evaluation of one's own teaching, and professional relationships and qualities (p. 202). Administrators measure educators according to these and other criteria through observation, but the observation is only the means, not the end. Discussion and dialog are to be an integral element in the evaluation of educators, rather than using only a checklist of characteristics to evaluate the educator (Moore, 1996). The discussion that ensues in the post-observation conference can bring up topics that need to be addressed in future professional growth opportunities and can be used as material for reflective work (Chaffin & Manfredo, 2010).

Ponticell (1995) made the following comments regarding professional growth strategies put in place as a result of such discussion:

1. Teachers learn when they perceive a personal need for change—risk-taking following an examination of their own teaching.
2. Teacher learning is context specific—sorting out what works in their teaching environment.
3. Teachers are more willing to look at and change classroom practices when they are instrumental in designing and taking charge of their own professional growth activities; enhanced efficacy leads to greater expenditure of time and effort, whether paid or not.
4. Sustained, substantive, and structured collegial interactions enhance mutuality and support risk taking; the process set up for interaction is vital.
5. Learning occurs over time.
6. Teachers' professionalism is validated by commitment and support from the building principal, central office, and university in trusting teachers to take control of their own professional growth. (Ponticell, 1995, in Beerens, 2000, p. 27)

Growth contracts are sometimes employed for tracking professional growth (Carlberg, 1981; Webster-Wright, 2009). Accountability to other teachers or to the school administration can assist educators with staying on target with their professional development efforts (Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008).

Observation can also be helpful in forming a sense of teacher identity preservice and novice music educators, as the initiates observe master teachers at work (Pellegrino, 2009). Observation affords educators at all stages in their careers the opportunity to

engage with other music education professionals, building a community of support (Council of Chief State School Officers' Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 2010; Hunt, 2009). Observation reports and reflections are commonly used to track change in the teacher's practice over time, and these materials, among others, can be included in a teacher's portfolio (Killian & Dye, 1999).

Journaling has been utilized as a vehicle for reflective practice in education (Tillman, 2003, p. 228). Used in various undergraduate music education programs to promote reflective practice, the custom of journaling sometimes is dismissed in favor of other methods of reflection (Teachout, 2007; Strand, 2006).

In lieu of physically being present to observe another teacher's classes, one might video record a teaching episode for later review and critique (Berg & Smith, 1996; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, Yoon, 2001). Berg and Smith (1996) suggested that this kind of video portfolio, along with the discussion of the video recording, can provide ways for teachers to conduct useful self-assessments and generate improvements.

Video recording can also be informative for preservice music teachers who are in the midst of their undergraduate training, as they watch video of their own teaching along with videos of veteran teachers (Wang & Odell, 2002; Borko, 2004). Madsen and Cassidy (2005) studied preservice and experienced teachers' ratings and comments on teacher effectiveness and student learning after observing videotaped music classes, and they suggested that identifying and articulating traits of effective teachers could be viewed as paramount in the preparation of future teachers. Killian and Dye (2009) proposed:

Perhaps students' self-evaluation of a series of their own videos might allow them to reflect on their overall growth and might prove to be a fruitful area of research in an effort to identify the teacher factors that "make a difference" and make those factors apparent to the new teachers (p. 22).

Bauer (2003) proposed that video recordings of teaching episodes could be material included in a teaching portfolio. A teaching portfolio is an effective vehicle for presentation of the ongoing development of a teacher's knowledge, skills, and abilities (Campbell & Brummett, 2002). Suggesting that portfolios can and perhaps should be used beyond college as a record of professional growth, Hill (2008) promoted the idea that a portfolio should be a dynamic collection of an educator's professional work. Citing the work of electronic portfolio expert Helen Barrett (1998), Hill described three kinds of portfolios: learning (formative), assessment (summative), and employment (marketing or showcase).

While most professionals would see the advantages of an employment portfolio, Hill explained that learning and assessment portfolios can be advantageous to professional music educators as they reflect on their work over the course of their career. While a teaching portfolio might not be considered a formal way of achieving professional growth, it has been used as a way to longitudinally track teachers' growth and development (Hammel, 2007; Killion, 1999). There is a need for flexibility in determining the contents of a portfolio, although it also necessary to suggest evidentiary work and materials that should be included in the educator's portfolio (Barrett, 1998; Berg, 2003; Bauer, 2003).

Some types of artifacts that may be part of a music teaching portfolio include lesson plans, samples of student work, video clips of teaching, philosophy statements, pictures and photographs of teaching materials and situations, peer and supervisor critiques, concert programs, compositions or arrangements, teacher-developed assessment tools/instruments, documentation of professional development activities, classroom management plans, and audio recordings of ensembles conducted by the teacher (Bauer, 2003, p. 11).

Assessing growth through portfolios is considered to be authentic assessment. “In other words, rather than merely telling or answering questions about what they know and can do, students [teachers] actually demonstrate their knowledge and skill” (Bauer, 2003, p. 11).

Portfolios can be used in the context of a professional learning community (PLC) or teacher learning communities (TLC). Borko (2004) discussed how research related to teacher learning communities “typically explores features of professional development programs such as the establishment and maintenance of communication norms and trust, as well as the collaborative interactions that occur when groups of teachers work together to examine and improve their practice” (p. 6). Scribner and Bradley-Levine (2010) cited the work of Louis, Marks, and Kruse (1996) in describing this environment for professional development: “Professional communities provide teachers space, time, and opportunities to reflect on their practice, focus on curriculum and student learning with peers, and break down the barriers of the classroom walls by de-privatizing their instructional practice” (Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010, p. 497).

Although some teachers accomplish their professional growth in their home school or district environment, attendance at workshops and professional conferences has been a popular choice used by numerous educators in the name of professional development (Apfelstadt, 1996; Garcia, 2004; Barrett, 2006; Bauer, 2010). “Perhaps the high attendance at professional conferences and workshops is an indication that music educators seek content-specific training” (Killian, Baker, & Johnson, 2005, p. 3). The collegial connections that are found at conferences assist in retention efforts, especially in retaining young or novice music educators (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Killian & Baker, 2004). Bauer (2007) charged organizations entrusted with planning conferences to attend to the needs of the teachers when planning sessions:

Organizers of professional conference should survey attendees regarding their preferences for conference sessions, and then develop sound conference assessment procedures to properly evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of the conferences. Only in this way might professional conferences provide a venue that has the potential to properly address the professional development issues and topics needed and desired by those attending (p. 19).

As has been noted in the preceding paragraphs, music educators are engaging in a variety of professional growth opportunities either in a self-directed path or along a path dictated by the local school district. “The professional growth of teachers is the product of their interpretations of their experiences and the expectations and demands being placed on the teaching profession” (van den Berg, 2002, p. 603). In the following

paragraphs, attention will be focused on the growth expectations that come from state boards of education for teacher licensure and certification.

Professional Growth Expectations from State Boards of Education

State certification for teachers, also called licensure, is accomplished differently in each state. The requirements and standards for certification are uniquely met through the various institutions of higher learning within the respective state, as described by Henry (2005):

Each state determines its own standards for certifying teachers.

Consequently, certification practices among states vary significantly.

Differences in standards appear even more varied when looking at a single certification area, such as music. For those involved in music teacher education, knowledge of the various certification practices is an important tool in providing quality, relevant preparation for future music educators.

While it is expected that those involved with music educator training be familiar with certification practices for the state in which their college or university is located, an awareness of requirements in other states is also valuable, particularly for private schools and programs serving a large number of out-of-state students (p. 47).

Henry (2005) also stated that various states delineate expectations regarding professional growth and development in documents related to the curricular frameworks suggested or mandated by the respective legislatures and state boards of education. A number of states require teachers to accomplish various activities toward professional growth and development in order for the teachers to be licensed or to renew a teaching

certificate (Henry, 2005). “More than two-thirds of states implement a tiered certification structure, in which teachers advance through levels of certification with added experience and continuing education. To encourage continuing education, most states have abandoned lifetime certificates” (Henry, 2005, p. 53). Certain states expect teachers to follow a documented professional development plan in order to progress to a higher level of certification (Roach, 2011).

Although a variety of activities are approved for terminal licensure renewal, university credit from an approved program is a predominant and consistent option. Typically, states compute 15 contact hours to one graduate credit, but the nature of required coursework is not specified per se (Roach, 2011, p. 94).

Roach (2011) also noted the following about the status of professional development around the country:

Not all states that require ongoing professional development for licensure renewal require that the professional development relate to student learning or school improvement. Likewise, not all states that require a professional development plan as part of the licensure renewal process require that the plan address student learning, yet there is a great deal of overlap in those states that require a professional development plan for licensure renewal and those that require that ongoing professional development link to student achievement and school improvement (p. 96).

The Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts (CEDFA) in Texas made the following statement regarding professional growth:

Professional growth activities should be carefully developed to emphasize scaffolded curricula targeting specific music content at each grade level.

Professional development should also provide ongoing assessment strategies that emphasize student achievement and critical and creative thinking processes. Models of excellence inspire music teachers to try new ideas and to grow professionally. Ideally, master teachers with expertise in the teaching areas of their audience share and teach their effective techniques (Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts, n.d., p. 91).

Whitehead (1997) addressed membership in professional organizations as a means for professional growth in Iowa:

Belonging to professional organizations provides key support to the music educator. With a plethora of such organizations, the music educator must determine which organization(s) to join based on his/her needs and which organization(s) best meet(s) those need.

When selecting an organization, issues that should be considered are:

1. Purpose of the organization.
2. Provision of assistance or mentorship among the membership.
3. Provision for continuing education of the membership.
4. Publications of the organization.
5. Provision of educational opportunities for members' students: such as large group honor festivals, solo and ensemble festivals, etc.

6. Support for research of issues important to the organization and its membership. (Whitehead, 1997, p. 31)

As described in the literature mentioned above, respective states have varying expectations regarding professional development for their teachers. The issue of teacher certification reciprocity comes into play when states do not agree on certification requirements.

The Future of Professional Growth Opportunities for Music Educators

Given the economic downturn in recent years, school programs have faced a variety of challenges, including cuts in funding. Burrack and Bazan (2010) noted that it has not been determined what kind of impact the current economic situation has had on music programs. As Marczely (1996) stated, funding for professional development can be an issue for educators across school districts. Fermanich (2002) learned that there were discrepancies in funding professional development, as well as the source(s) of the funding. Burrack and Bazan (2010) suggested that “the qualifications and professional development needs of music teachers in rural Midwest schools have not been assessed” (p. 1).

While professional development needs have not been assessed, programs cuts due to budget constraints have brought about other issues, as described by Burrack and Bazan (2010): “Additional duties provided to teachers, loss of instructional time, and increased scheduling conflicts were the most frequent issues related to funding effects” (p.1). Teachers are expected by their school districts and state licensure to stay current in their professional development; however, the proper funding is not always in place in order to realize the professional development opportunity for the teachers.

There are still needs to be met in the way of professional growth. Jorgensen (2010) expressed the need to for teachers to keep pace with changes in education, especially taking into account cultural shifts occurring in the country:

Cultural changes around us challenge our complacency, especially those of us who are older, and suggest that we may need to change what we do, that our education thus far may not suffice, and it may be necessary to discover other ways of thinking, doing, and being that meet the needs of our students in today's world. At the same time, we struggle to hold onto those things from the past that we treasure and wish to pass on to future generations. We are reluctant to let go of those things that we have been taught or that we have come to regard as precious simply because of cultural pressures that emanate from the mass media, political and economic agencies, and religious institutions, and with which we may disagree, sometimes profoundly (p. 22).

To answer Jorgensen's plea for continued attention to cultural change, welcome additions to professional growth opportunities for music educators might include workshops, post-baccalaureate classes, and master's degree classes that would deal with how to make music education culturally relevant in a society that is daily becoming increasingly diverse.

Richmond (2010) provided five strategies to be employed at the higher education level. Simply stated, the five strategies are: (1) Conserve the core musical traditions; (2) expand the curricular repertoire; (3) position the university music school to achieve greater teaching efficiencies; (4) exploit the emerging music technologies to empower

young music graduates to function effectively as artist/entrepreneurs; and (5) expand music teacher education curricula to align music teacher preparedness with students' interests in composition, multimedia, and vernacular performance. These strategies could be adapted for the local school district as well.

The expansion of the curricular repertoire would address the need for more groups that could deal with more of the vernacular music. Richmond's third strategy would take creative work on the part of the local music educators, especially at the high school level. Classes at the local level that address music technologies of various types (strategy #4) would diversify the curriculum (strategy #2) and bring in additional students to the music program, which would increase the visibility and the viability of the music program. Richmond's fifth strategy is predicated on the idea that the music teacher graduating from a given university's music school will have the necessary tools to teach students in the areas of composition, multimedia, and vernacular performance. Since few music teachers have a broad background in these areas, it would be necessary for music teachers to seek professional growth and development opportunities in order to enhance their teaching.

Specifically in the Midwest, Burrack and Bazan (2010) noted comments from 46 Nebraska music teachers regarding the areas of professional development they most desired, providing ideas for future examination on professional development. Topics suggested for professional development included activities for singing in tune for young children, arranging, assessment, band techniques, classroom methodology, current trends and practices, discipline (classroom management), elementary rhythm and note naming games, history training, instrumental conducting, movement within the vocal rehearsal, orchestral conducting, physiology of the voice, preparing music without an accompanist,

private voice instruction techniques, repertoire suggestions, string pedagogy, student engagement, student recruitment and retention, swing choir ideas, teaching the current curriculum in less time, technology, vocal development at various levels, vocal warm-up activities, vocal pedagogy, woodwinds pedagogy, and working with beginners in instrumental music.

Summary

The studies, books, and articles reviewed in this chapter focused on various factors related to professional growth in educators. This review of literature, then, provides insights into professional growth opportunities utilized by educators in various places, not only music educators. Most of the studies and articles reflect new perspectives on what professional growth means for educators in the early decades of the twenty-first century.

The research indicates that music educators are pursuing a variety of professional growth activities; however, there are different reasons for pursuing the various kinds of professional growth that are available. Some teachers pursue growth opportunities out of contractual obligation or in order to fulfill state licensure requirements, while others seek to broaden their knowledge base for personal reasons. Reviewing the literature provided a solid foundation and framework for the study that followed, as similar issues were addressed in the survey conducted by the researcher.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Various socioeconomic changes in recent times, along with national and state legislation, have led to new demands on schools, colleges, and professional organizations to become more resourceful in advancing professional development for educators. What is involved in professional growth? This is a basic, yet important question because it informs professional development programs, both formal and informal.

This study was conducted in order to investigate how Nebraska's music educators view professional growth and development, determine what activities are being utilized in the name of professional growth, and to determine what kinds of professional growth are willing to pursue in the future. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- (1) What professional growth experiences—such as journal-keeping, conference attendance, mentoring, observation, continuing education, in-services, and graduate study—keep music teachers in Nebraska engaged and learning throughout their professional lives?
- (2) What do Nebraska music teachers perceive to be barriers to their professional growth?
- (3) How do Nebraska music teachers define worthwhile professional growth opportunities?

(4) Are the professional growth choices of music teachers related to the years of experience of the music teacher?

(5) Does the area of teacher certification, the area of teaching assignment (general, choral, instrumental), or grade level assignment have an effect on the kind of professional growth choices made by music teachers?

(6) Does age, gender, highest degree held, or NSAA District location impact Nebraska music teachers' professional development choices?

Research Design

This study was a descriptive study, designed to analyze the current professional development practices of Nebraska music educators. A survey was conducted to retrieve data through a web-based survey developed by the researcher. The survey allowed the researcher to ask Nebraska music educators questions regarding their current and preferred choices in professional growth.

Pilot Study

Prior to conducting this study, the researcher undertook a qualitative study on the same topic in a pilot study in the summer of 2009. The qualitative study was done for a qualitative research class at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, under the instruction of Dr. Ronald Shope. The purpose of that multiple instrumental case study was to understand and describe the professional growth opportunities utilized by K-12 music teachers in Nebraska. That study utilized the multiple instrumental case study tradition in order to collect data from various music educators in Nebraska who had information regarding professional growth opportunities available to K-12 music teachers in the state. The use of multiple cases strengthened the results by replicating the pattern-matching,

thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the study.

The pilot study provided an interview structure for a qualitative study, which supplied the researcher with a framework for the questions used in the current study. Several open-ended questions from the qualitative study were converted to multiple choice and/or free response questions for this study, with additional questions being generated from answers given to the original qualitative interview questions.

Current Study

The survey used in the current study was based on a survey designed by Andrew Garcia (2004). Several questions were drawn from the Garcia survey, while a select few were adapted for use in this study. Additionally, several items were constructed based on a survey conducted by the Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (2010). This survey was divided into six sections. The first and sixth sections involved data gathered to determine overall opinions and preferences regarding professional growth. The second, third, fourth, and fifth sections dealt with various kinds of professional growth opportunities: school or district offerings and support, college (graduate) courses, observations, and alternative approaches, including journaling and mentoring. The last section of the survey contained demographic information, gathered to ensure that respondents are representative of the population.

Population and Sample

The survey population consisted of Nebraska elementary, middle, and high school music educators from both public and parochial schools. Since the entire population was surveyed, no sampling was conducted. The survey was web-based and was sent to all

members of the population via email, which meant the collection of e-mail addresses was critical to the success of the survey. Since no single database of music educators' email addresses existed, the researcher used the 2009-2010 directory for the Nebraska Music Educators Association (NMEA) to begin developing an email database for the survey. However, not all Nebraska K-12 music educators are members of NMEA. The researcher downloaded a directory of all public and parochial school music teachers from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) website and cross-referenced that listing with the names on the NMEA email database. The NDE list did not contain email addresses for each contact. Since the availability of e-mail addresses is highly important and a limiting factor in the determination of survey participants, the researcher searched school district and building-specific websites to determine email addresses for the music teachers on the NDE listing that were not already present in the database based on the NMEA directory.

Personnel and Facilities

Upon completion of the email database, the survey was launched with an informed consent description communicated in the initial email. Participants had a three-week timeframe to complete the survey during January of 2011. The study was conducted via an internet survey using *SurveyMonkey*. The researcher was the sole party responsible for the research.

Materials

The survey (see Appendix A) was designed to evaluate the individual respondent's background in professional growth, specifically examining the preference of professional growth opportunities. A variety of demographic information was gathered

from each respondent, including the teaching endorsement(s) held by the teacher, the grade level(s) taught by the teacher, the total number of years the teacher has taught, the age of the teacher, the highest degree held by the teacher, and the location of the teacher according to the districts of the Nebraska State Activities Association (NSAA).

Survey items were developed to correlate closely with the research questions, and utilized a series of multiple-choice questions, as well as open-ended questions. This self-report document encouraged teachers to reflect on the professional development programs in which they have participated and to describe the future preferences for their professional growth.

Research Question 1 (what professional growth experiences are utilized) was measured with survey items 1, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18. Research Question 2 (barriers) was measured with survey items 3, 6, 7, and 9. Research Question 3 (definition of professional growth) was measured with survey items 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16, 19, 20, and 21. Research Question 4 (years of experience) was measured with survey items 2, 5, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 26. Research Question 5 (teacher certification area, teaching assignment, and grade level assignment) was measured with survey items 2, 5, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 24. Research Question 6 (age, gender, highest degree held, and NSAA District location) was measured with survey items 2, 4, 5, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28, and 29.

SurveyMonkey allowed the researcher to generate a variety of survey questions, including single answer, multiple answers, a matrix of answers, and open-ended answers. The researcher was able to view the results of the survey online and was also able to download the results for analysis.

Procedure

The survey was developed to acquire an understanding of professional growth opportunities utilized by Nebraska's music educators. Both broad and specific questions were asked. A link to the survey was sent to music educators via email and was conducted entirely via the Internet.

A pilot study of the validity of the instrument took place prior to the actual study, using four music educators from Nebraska. Sensitivity was given toward the length of the survey, with the goal that the survey would be long enough to gather an adequate amount of information but not overly long that the length would discourage participation. The four professional music educators who participated in this pilot study were supplied with Survey Refinement Document (see Appendix B) and an Instrument Assessment Form (see Appendix C). The Instrument Assessment Form was designed for the pilot study participants to use to provide feedback with respect to the clarity and appropriateness of the survey instrument through the use of a Likert scale. The Instrument Assessment Form asked the following questions:

1. Are the survey directions clear?
2. Are the survey items related to understanding professional growth opportunities utilized by Nebraska music educators?
3. Are the survey items appropriate with regard to size, type, and format?
4. Please share any other comments you have about the questionnaire.

All reviewers gave the survey instrument high marks. Respondents were asked to answer each of the first three questions with (1) No, (2) Moderately, or (3) Very. For each of the first three questions the mean was the same ($M = 3$). Upon receipt of the feedback

from the pilot study, minor revisions in the survey regarding word choice, word order, and sentence syntax. The overall integrity of the survey instrument remained intact. The survey was then accomplished according to the following schedule:

(1) Invitation email. This email invited participation and was sent to all participants via a function on *SurveyMonkey*. In the email, a link to the online survey was provided for the participants.

(2) Follow-up email. This email contained an encouraging reminder that was sent to all participants of the study who had not completed the online survey. Because *SurveyMonkey* was able to track which email addresses had not yet responded to the survey, only those who had not yet completed the survey were targeted for this reminder.

(3) Final Contact. One last email was sent to those who had not responded. These non-respondents were given one more encouraging reminder to complete the survey within a week, if they chose to participate in the study.

Reliability and Validity

Two survey questions (#5 and #21) served as dependent measures. The Cronbach's alpha calculated for survey item #5 was .63. The Cronbach's alpha calculated for survey item #21 was .77. Content validity was determined by four practicing professional music educators, as well as by a review of the literature. As stated earlier, the panel of experts found the instrument to be sufficient in content. Additionally, the panel of experts also examined items of face validity, including format, size, and clarity. The results of the review of the Instrument Assessment Form are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Results of Instrument Assessment Form

	No	Moderately	Very
1. Are the survey directions clear?	0	0	4
2. Are the survey items related to understanding professional growth opportunities utilized by Nebraska music educators?	0	0	4
3. Are the survey items appropriate with regard to size, type, and format?	0	0	4

An additional area was reserved for further comments the members of the panel had regarding the survey instrument. One member noticed several typographical errors, which were corrected before the survey was administered. This same panel member noticed that some of the questions would accept more than one answer, although only one answer was intended. This was corrected in the survey design using *SurveyMonkey*. Another panel member noted the following, which were corrected: (1) it might be possible to be observed zero times by an administrator; (2) some questions should allow for more than one answer; i.e., what grades do you teach could be K-5 AND 9-12.

Construct validity was based on the review of the literature. The review of the literature determined the content design of the survey instrument, which was validated by the panel of experts. The researcher's understanding of the construct of professional development was affirmed by the literature in several ways. The literature provided a net of meaning for *professional growth*, as designated in the operating definition of professional growth cited in Chapter 1. Survey items were constructed around the theoretical view that professional growth encompasses not only workshops and

presentations, but also includes mentoring, journal writing, observations, and college graduate classes.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher designed a web-based survey instrument for this study (see Appendix A). The online survey was electronically linked to an email cover letter sent to all subjects to collect the necessary data (see Appendix D). The email cover letter explained the purpose of the study. Application for permission to proceed with this study was made to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln (see Appendix G).

After the initial email was sent to the 1,243 email addresses in the database, it was discovered that ninety-nine email addresses were no longer valid since the initial email was returned to the researcher as undeliverable. This reduced the total number of participants to 1,144, which was the final number of subjects used in this study. After the final contact, a total of 474 people had started the survey, with 456 actually completing the survey, yielding a return rate of 39.9%.

Five days after the initial email was sent, a follow-up email (see Appendix E) was sent to those who had not yet responded to the initial email request. This follow-up email asked the subjects to submit their completed questionnaire and emphasized the importance of their participation. Fifteen days after the initial email was sent, a second follow-up email (see Appendix F) was emailed to all who had not yet submitted a completed survey, again asking them to complete the survey and stressing the importance of their participation. At the end of the 25th day of the study, those surveys unaccounted for were disregarded due to mortality.

Data Analysis

Completed data was downloaded from the completed surveys via *SurveyMonkey* and imported into Microsoft Excel for data analysis. The data were analyzed using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 19 and using “R” version 2.13.0. (“R” is a free software environment for statistical computing and graphics.) All statistical methods of the study were tested at the .05 level. Mike Zweifel at the Nebraska Evaluation and Research (NEAR) Center provided assistance in data analysis.

Research Question 1, referencing the kinds of professional growth that Nebraska music educators are using, was answered using simple descriptive statistics. Research Question 2, concerning the barriers encountered by Nebraska music educators when pursuing professional growth, was answered using simple descriptive statistics. Research Question 3, which dealt with the definition of worthwhile professional growth opportunities, was answered using simple descriptive statistics.

Research Question 4, relating the years of experience to professional growth choices, was measured a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Research Question 5, relating the teacher certification area, teaching assignment area, and grade level assignment to professional growth choices, was analyzed with three one-way ANOVAs. Research Question 6, which dealt with demographic factors of age, gender, highest degree held, and NSAA District location, was analyzed with a t-test for gender, followed by three one-way ANOVAs for age, NSAA District, and highest degree earned.

Summary

This chapter presented the details of the design, participants, survey construction, and data analysis used in this study. The purpose of the survey instrument was to

determine the professional growth choices and preferences of Nebraska music educators, to define professional growth among this population, to examine the barriers obstructing professional growth endeavors, and to determine the impact of years of teaching experience, age, gender, highest degree held, and NSAA District location upon the choices and preferences for professional growth.

A panel of experts reviewed the survey instrument for construct, content, and face validity, and determined that the instrument was satisfactory for its intended use. The subjects ($N = 1,144$) for the survey consisted of music educators in Nebraska's public and parochial elementary, middle, and high schools. Three emails were transmitted soliciting participants' contribution, yielding 456 completed surveys, with the data collected through the use of *SurveyMonkey*.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the kinds of professional growth activities employed by music teachers in the schools of Nebraska. This study sought to determine what kinds of professional growth opportunities music teachers feel they need to function as imaginative, creative professional educators capable of dealing with the complexities of music education in the 21st century.

In order to achieve the overall purpose of this study, the following research questions were developed:

- (1) What professional growth experiences—such as journal-keeping, conference attendance, mentoring, observation, continuing education, in-services, and graduate study—keep music teachers in Nebraska engaged and learning throughout their professional lives?
- (2) What do Nebraska music teachers perceive to be barriers to their professional growth?
- (3) How do Nebraska music teachers define worthwhile professional growth opportunities?
- (4) Are the professional growth choices of music teachers related to the years of experience of the music teacher?
- (5) Does the area of teacher certification, the area of teaching assignment (general, choral, instrumental), or grade level assignment have an effect on the kind of professional growth choices made by music teachers?

(6) Does age, gender, highest degree held, or Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) District location impact Nebraska music teachers' professional development choices?

Chapter four begins with a presentation of the demographic data. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to the presentation of the results of the research questions.

Demographic Analysis

From the total of music educators ($N = 1,144$) who were identified through the NMEA directory and the NDE directory, a total number of 456 surveys were completed. The demographic analysis of this information provided the data necessary to examine research question six: Does age, gender, highest degree held, or NSAA District location impact Nebraska music teachers' professional development preferences? Personal variables examined in this study included age, gender, highest degree held (educational background), and NSAA District location of the population.

Table 2 represents the frequency and percentage of the respondents based on age, gender, highest degree held, and NSAA District location. Respondents were asked to designate their age from the following: 20-29 years of age, 30-39 years of age, 40-49 years of age, 50-59 years of age, 60 years of age and older. The survey asked each respondent to check the highest educational degree earned: bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate. Respondents were also given the option of checking a selection that said the respondent held no college degree. No respondents chose that selection. The Nebraska School Activities Association divides the State of Nebraska into six districts. These districts are geographic in nature and provide a structure for high school activities.

Table 2

*Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Demographics:
Age, Gender, Highest Degree Held, and NSAA District Location*

Classification	Frequency	% of Total Returned
Age Responses		
20-29 years of age	103	22.4
30-39 years of age	90	19.6
40-49 years of age	107	23.3
50-59 years of age	129	28.1
60 years and older	30	6.5
Gender Responses		
Male Respondents	156	34.0
Female Respondents	303	66.0
Highest Degree Held Responses		
No College Degree	0	0
Bachelor's Degree	232	50.5
Master's Degree	220	47.9
Doctoral Degree	7	1.5
NSAA District Location Responses		
District I	125	32.8
District II	79	20.7
District III	56	14.7
District IV	76	19.9
District V	20	5.2
District VI	25	6.6
Skipped Question	93	

Demographic information received in this item was valuable in identifying the backgrounds of the respondents. Examining the ages of the respondents, it was noted that there was a fairly balanced representation from each of the first four categories, in which the ages are when teachers are commonly still active in the classroom. Those who are 60 years of age and older are customarily in retirement, which explains the smaller representation from that age group. One-third of the respondents were male, while two-thirds were female. Half of the respondents listed their highest degree as a bachelor's degree, while almost half held a master's degree, and a small percentage held a doctoral

degree of some kind. The responses regarding the NSAA District location were not as balanced as had been hoped. Approximately one-third of the respondents were from District I, which is the southeastern corner of the state. District II respondents comprised about one-fifth of the total sample. These respondents are located in the eastern part of the state. The northeastern corner of the state is the location for District III, which comprised one-seventh of the sample. District IV, which is the north central part of the state, was represented in about one-fifth of the respondents. The southwestern corner of the state, District V, had only one-twentieth of the respondents in the sample. District VI, the northwestern corner of the state, including the panhandle region, was represented in the sample by one-fifteenth of the respondents. While responses were received from only 40% of the population, a review of the demographics of the respondents shows that they were not demographically different from the demographics of the entire population. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the survey results were not biased in an unrepresentative manner.

Additional demographic information was collected from respondents to facilitate analysis of research question 4: *Are the professional growth choices of music teachers related to the years of experience of the music teacher?* Table 3 represents the frequency and percentage of the respondents based on years of teaching experience. Respondents were asked to choose from the following options: 1-7 years, 8-15 years, or more than 15 years. Just over half the respondents were the most experienced teachers in the study, with more than 15 years of teaching experience to their credit. The other two categories were fairly balanced in their representation. Overall, veteran teachers who brought the perspective of experience to the study dominated the survey.

Table 3
Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Demographics: Years of Teaching Experience

Classification	Frequency	% of Total Returned
1-7 years of teaching experience	131	28.5
8-15 years of teaching experience	92	20.0
More than 15 years of teaching experience	236	51.4

Furthermore, demographic information was collected from survey participants to assist in the analysis of research question 5: Does the area of teacher certification, the area of teaching assignment (general, choral, instrumental), or grade level assignment have an effect on the kind of professional growth choices by music teachers? Table 4 represents the frequency and percentage of the respondents based on teacher certification, area of teaching assignment, and grade level assignment. For the area of teacher certification, respondents were asked to choose from the following: K-12 Field Endorsement, K-6 Vocal/General Music, K-12 Vocal, or K-12 Instrumental. Regarding area of teaching assignment, participants were asked to choose from General Music, Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, or *Other*, with the ability to make more than one selection. Respondents who chose *Other* were asked to specify the type(s) of music classes they teach. Responses under *Other* ($n = 55$) varied, with several teachers reporting that they taught various specialized classes. Such classes included the following: classroom piano ($n = 5$), guitar class ($n = 13$), college music courses ($n = 6$), music technology ($n = 6$), private piano lessons ($n = 4$), music theory ($n = 15$), handbells ($n = 2$), music appreciation ($n = 4$), recorder ($n = 2$), specialized percussion ($n = 2$), and AP Music Theory ($n = 1$).

When specifying grade level assignment, respondents were asked to choose from Kindergarten-Grade 5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12, or *Other*, with respondents able to make more than one selection. Respondents who chose *Other* were asked to specify their

teaching assignment according to grade level. The 113 responses from those who chose *Other* were then analyzed and categorized by the researcher within the appropriate grade levels specified on the survey; for example, a teacher who chose *Other* and stated that the grade level taught was Grades 4-5 had that response categorized under Kindergarten-Grade 5. Because of the variety of comments under *Other*, three other headings were added in this area: Prekindergarten/Preschool, College, and Administration.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Demographics: Teacher Certification, Area of Teaching Assignment, and Grade Level Assignment

Classification	Frequency	% of Total Returned
Teacher Certification Responses		
K-12 Field Endorsement	202	44.0
K-6 Vocal/General Music	43	9.4
K-12 Vocal	195	42.5
K-12 Instrumental	168	36.6
Skipped Question	15	
Area of Teaching Assignment Responses		
General Music	298	64.9
Vocal Music	275	59.9
Instrumental Music	229	49.9
Other	55	
Skipped Question	15	
Grade Level Assignment Responses		
Prekindergarten/Preschool	18	3.9
Kindergarten-Grade 5	328	71.5
Grades 6-8	344	74.9
Grades 9-12	278	60.6
College	6	1.3
Administration	2	0.4
Skipped Question	15	

Research Question One

Defining what professional growth opportunities are utilized by Nebraska music educators was the focus of this research question: “What professional growth experiences—such as journal-keeping, conference attendance, mentoring, observation, continuing education, in-services, and graduate study—keep music teachers in Nebraska engaged and learning throughout their professional lives?” This research question was addressed with survey items and analyzed with descriptive statistics: 1, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18.

Survey item one asked: Within the last three years, in what kind of professional growth experiences have you participated? Respondents were asked to choose from the following, with the ability to choose more than one response: Continuing Education (this can be in the form of workshops, seminars, home-study or online courses, conferences, or hands-on training), Participating in Local School District In-services, Journal-keeping, Attending Professional Conferences, Mentoring another Teacher, Being Mentored by another Teacher, Being Observed by an Administrator or by another Teacher/Colleague, Graduate Studies, and *Other*. Those choosing *Other* were asked to specify the kind of professional growth in which they have engaged. Survey question number one had 473 respondents, with a Mean of 4.48 and a Standard Deviation of 1.34. Table 5 represents the frequency and percentage of the respondents based on their choices in survey item one.

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item One: Within the last three years, in what kind of professional growth experiences have you participated?

Professional Growth Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Continuing education	427	90.3
Participating in local school district in-services	422	89.2
Attending professional conferences	398	84.1
Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague	376	79.5
Mentoring another teacher	175	37.0
Graduate studies	163	34.5
Being mentored by another teacher	88	18.6
Other	37	7.8
Journal-keeping	35	7.4

Respondents who chose *Other* (free response) reported a variety of professional growth experiences, including: reading professional journals and books ($n = 5$), supervising practicum students and student teachers ($n = 4$), presenting at a conference ($n = 3$), participating in graduate studies and obtaining an endorsement in an entirely different field ($n = 2$), achieving National Board Certification ($n = 2$), participating in out- of-school ensembles ($n = 2$), attending PLC meetings ($n = 2$).

Table 6 shows the frequency of multiple responses for survey item number one, which asked for respondents to indicate the various professional growth opportunities experienced by the respondents for the past three years. For instance, 16.7% of respondents ($n = 79$) selected three responses. The highest percentage (29.0%) of respondents ($n = 137$) chose five responses.

Table 6

Frequency of Multiple Responses in Professional Growth Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Number of Responses Chosen	Frequency	Percentage
1	11	2.3
2	19	4.0
3	79	16.7
4	119	25.2
5	137	29.0
6	84	17.8
7	22	4.7
8	2	.4
Total	473	100.0

Table 7 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the choice of *Continuing education*.

For example, every time a respondent selected *Continuing education*, 91.57% of the time they also selected *Participating in local school district in-services*. An example on the other end of the continuum would be when a respondent selected *Continuing education*, 7.73% of the time they also selected *Journal-keeping*, and 6.79% selected *Other*.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Continuing Education in Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Professional Growth Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Participating in local school district in-services	427	.9157
Attending professional conferences	427	.8501
Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague	427	.8126
Mentoring another teacher	427	.3747
Graduate studies	427	.3607
Being mentored by another teacher	427	.1897
Journal-keeping	427	.0773
Other	427	.0679

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Participating in Local School District In-services in Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Professional Growth Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Continuing Education	422	.9265
Attending Professional Conferences	422	.8626
Being Observed by an Administrator or by another Teacher/Colleague	422	.8199
Mentoring another Teacher	422	.3839
Graduate Studies	422	.3531
Being Mentored by another Teacher	422	.1801
Journal-keeping	422	.0806
Other	422	.0758

Table 8 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the choice of *Participating in local school district in-services*. For every time a respondent selected *Participating in local school district in-services*, 92.65% of the time they also selected *Continuing education*. Again on the end of the continuum is the choice of *Journal-keeping*, which was chosen 8.06% of the time that respondents selected *Continuing education*, and *Other* was chosen 7.58% of the time.

Table 9 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the choice of *Journal-keeping*. For every time a respondent selected *Journal-keeping*, 97.14% of the time they also selected *Participating in local school district in-services*. On the opposite end, every time a respondent selected *Journal-keeping*, 31.43% of the time they also selected *Being mentored by another teacher*, and 2.86% of the time they also selected *Other*.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Journal-Keeping in Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Professional Growth Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Participating in local school district in-services	35	.9714
Continuing education	35	.9429
Attending professional conferences	35	.9429
Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague	35	.9143
Graduate studies	35	.4571
Mentoring another teacher	35	.3429
Being mentored by another teacher	35	.3143
Other	35	.0286

Table 10 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the choice of *Attending professional conferences*. For every time a respondent selected *Attending professional conferences*, 91.46% of the time they also selected *Participating in local school district in-services*. Once again, *Journal-keeping* was on the lower end, selected by just 8.29% of those respondents who chose *Attending professional conferences*. The lowest response was seen when every time a respondent selected *Attending professional conferences*, 7.54% of the time they also selected *Other*.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Attending Professional Conferences in Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Professional Growth Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Participating in local school district in-services	398	.9146
Continuing education	398	.9121
Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague	398	.8166
Mentoring another teacher	398	.4045
Graduate studies	398	.3593
Being mentored by another teacher	398	.2060
Journal-keeping	398	.0829
Other	398	.0754

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics for Mentoring Another Teacher in Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Professional Growth Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Participating in local school district in-services	175	.9257
Attending professional conferences	175	.9200
Continuing education	175	.9143
Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague	175	.8171
Graduate studies	175	.3200
Being mentored by another teacher	175	.1486
Other	175	.0971
Journal-keeping	175	.0686

Table 11 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the choice of *Mentoring another teacher*. For every time a respondent selected *Mentoring another teacher*, 92.57% of the time they also selected *Participating in local school district in-services*. *Journal-keeping* was on the lower end of choices, selected by just 6.86% of those respondents who chose *Mentoring another teacher*. These respondents chose the *Other* category more frequently than *Journal-keeping*.

Table 12 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the choice of *Being mentored by another teacher*. For every time a respondent selected *Being mentored by another teacher*, 93.18% of the time they also selected *Attending professional conferences*. For every time a respondent selected *Being mentored by another teacher*, 93.18% of the time they also selected *Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague*. *Journal-keeping* was selected by 12.5% of those respondents who chose *Being mentored by another teacher*, which is a higher percentage than expressed by respondents to other choices. The lowest response was seen when every time a respondent selected *Being mentored by another teacher*, 3.41% of the time they also selected *Other*.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Being Mentored by Another Teacher in Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Professional Growth Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Attending professional conferences	88	.9318
Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague	88	.9318
Continuing education	88	.9205
Participating in local school district in-services	88	.8636
Graduate studies	88	.5114
Mentoring another teacher	88	.2955
Journal-keeping	88	.1250
Other	88	.0341

Table 13 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the choice of *Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague*. For every time a respondent selected *Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague*, 96.44% of the time they also selected *Attending professional conferences*. *Journal-keeping* was selected by 8.51% of those respondents who chose *Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague*, and *Other* was chosen 7.71% of the time.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics for Being Observed by an Administrator or by another Teacher/Colleague in Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Professional Growth Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Attending professional conferences	376	.9644
Continuing education	376	.9229
Participating in local school district in-services	376	.9202
Mentoring another teacher	376	.3803
Graduate studies	376	.3697
Being mentored by another teacher	376	.2181
Journal-keeping	376	.0851
Other	376	.0771

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics for Graduate Studies in Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Professional Growth Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Continuing education	163	.9448
Participating in local school district in-services	163	.9141
Attending professional conferences	163	.8773
Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague	163	.8528
Mentoring another teacher	163	.3436
Being mentored by another teacher	163	.2761
Journal-keeping	163	.0982
Other	163	.0675

Table 14 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the choice of *Graduate studies*.

For every time a respondent selected *Graduate studies*, 94.48% of the time they also selected *Continuing education*. *Journal-keeping* was selected by 9.82% of those respondents who chose *Graduate studies*, and *Other* was chosen by 6.75% of those respondents who chose *Graduate studies*.

Table 15 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the choice of *Other*. For every time a respondent selected *Other*, 86.49% of the time they also selected *Continuing education*. *Journal-keeping* was selected by 2.70% of those respondents who chose *Other*.

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics for Other in Survey Item One: Growth Opportunities Experienced in the Last Three Years

Professional Growth Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Participating in local school district in-services	37	.8649
Attending professional conferences	37	.8108
Continuing education	37	.7838
Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague	37	.7838
Mentoring another teacher	37	.4595
Graduate studies	37	.2973
Being mentored by another teacher	37	.0811
Journal-keeping	37	.0270

Survey item 10 asked respondents if they had taken additional college credits beyond the bachelor's degree. The majority of respondents ($n = 415$, 88.9%) stated that they had taken college credits beyond their bachelor's degree. The minority of respondents ($n = 52$, 11.1%) had not taken college credits beyond their bachelor's degree.

The 415 respondents who responded in the positive to question 10 were then offered a question that asked for what purpose the additional hours were taken. Respondents were given the following choices: Advanced Degree (master's or doctoral degree), Tenure Requirements for School District, To Satisfy Personal Desire, To Keep Current on Educational Practices, For Salary Advancement, or *Other*. Respondents were able to select all that applied to their specific situation. Respondents who chose *Other* were asked to specify the purpose for taking hours beyond the bachelor's degree. Table 16 represents the frequency and percentage of the respondents based on their selection of the option for the purpose of the additional hours beyond the bachelor's degree.

Table 16

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item 11: Advanced Degree (master's or doctoral degree), Tenure Requirements for School District, To Satisfy Personal Desire, To Keep Current on Educational Practices, For Salary Advancement, or Other

Reason for Taking Additional Hours	Frequency	Percentage
Salary advancement	321	67.9
Advanced degree	304	64.3
Personal desire	269	56.9
Keep current on educational practices	217	45.9
Tenure requirements	100	21.1
Other	33	7.0

Table 16 shows the ranked order of the expressed reasons for taking additional hours beyond the bachelor's degree, with the foremost reason being salary advancement. This option was chosen by two-thirds of the respondents who participated in graduate studies. The second top reason for pursuing additional hours beyond the bachelor's degree was to obtain an advanced degree ($n = 304$). Personal desire ranked third ($n = 269$). Keeping current on educational practices via graduate studies was not ranked in the top three choices; rather, it was ranked fourth by the respondents ($n = 217$).

Respondents who selected *Other* had a variety of reasons for pursuing additional hours beyond their initial bachelor's degree. These reason included the following: continued teacher certification ($n = 16$), additional endorsement ($n = 6$), ability to teach at the college/university level ($n = 2$), advanced degree not in music ($n = 2$), to complete a second bachelor's degree ($n = 1$), to gain skills and knowledge in order to develop a new program ($n = 1$), and to accumulate professional development credits required in order to stay current according to the local school district ($n = 1$).

Table 17

Frequency of Multiple Responses in Professional Growth Survey Item 11: Advanced Degree (master's or doctoral degree), Tenure Requirements for School District, To Satisfy Personal Desire, To Keep Current on Educational Practices, For Salary Advancement, or Other

Number of Responses Chosen	Frequency	Percentage
0	59	12.5
1	62	13.1
2	75	15.9
3	122	25.8
4	110	23.3
5	44	9.3
6	1	.2
Total	473	100

Table 17 shows the frequency of multiple responses for survey item number 11. For instance, 13.1% of respondents selected two responses. The highest frequency came from those respondents who chose three responses ($n = 122$). The frequency of 59 for zero responses was calculated from the 52 respondents who had no hours beyond the bachelor's degree and the seven respondents who skipped the question. The overall descriptive statistics for survey question number 11 were $N = 473$, $M = 2.65$, and $SD = 1.52$.

Continuing with research question one, survey item 12 asked respondents how many times per school year an administrator formally observes them in a classroom situation, resulting in some kind of evaluation of their teaching. Table 18 represents the frequency and percentage of the respondents based on the number of observations the teacher underwent. Respondents were asked to choose 0, 1-2, 3-4, or 5 more observations. Those teachers who had been observed 1-2 times per year ($n = 357$) reported the highest frequency.

Table 18

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item 12: Number of Observations by an Administrator

Number of Observations	Frequency	Percentage
0	38	8.0
1-2	357	75.5
3-4	52	11.0
5 or more	19	4.0
Skipped Question	7	

Table 19

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item 13: Frequency of Feedback from an Administrator following an Observation

Frequency of Feedback	Frequency	Percentage
Every Time	320	67.7
Almost Every Time	73	15.4
Occasionally	24	5.1
Rarely	11	2.3
Skipped Question	45	

Survey item 13 asked the respondents how many times they were provided with oral or written feedback after an observation by an administrator. Respondents were able to choose from the following options: every time, almost every time, occasionally, or rarely. Table 19 represents the frequency and percentage of the responses based on the frequency of feedback received. The 38 participants who previously answered that an administrator never observed them during a school year were allowed to skip this item ($n = 38$). Seven other respondents also skipped this item, bringing the total number to 45, as displayed in Table 19.

Table 20 represents the frequency and percentage of the respondents based on the number of observations made of another teacher. Survey item 14 asked respondents how many times they were observe another teacher in a classroom situation. Respondents were able to choose from the following options: 0, 1-2, 3-4, or 5 or more. The majority of teachers ($n = 271$, 57.3%) related that they were not able to observe another teacher in a classroom situation. A number of teachers ($n = 65$, 13.7%) were able to observe other teachers in a classroom situation five or more times during the school year.

Table 20
Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item 14: Number of Observations of another Teacher in a Classroom Situation

Number of Observations	Frequency	Percentage
0	271	57.3
1-2	113	23.9
3-4	17	3.6
5 or more	65	13.7
Skipped Question	7	

Survey item 15 was a continuation of the previous item, asking respondents what they had learned from observing another teacher. The respondents who answered this question ($n = 188$) did so in a free response format, with many respondents citing more than one item that was learned from observing another teacher. The researcher grouped responses according to similar themes or topics, resulting in the following list of things learned from observing another teacher: behavior/classroom management ($n = 99$); alternative approaches/strategies to teaching a specific concept ($n = 69$); ideas for the classroom, including lesson plans, games, songs, and warm-ups ($n = 25$); classroom organization and procedures ($n = 23$); acceptable and unacceptable teaching practices ($n = 20$); awareness, pacing, sequencing ($n = 19$); basic support, such as answering of questions, advice, encouragement, motivation ($n = 15$); meeting a variety of learning styles ($n = 14$); rehearsal techniques ($n = 10$); how to engage students ($n = 9$); conducting style ($n = 4$); student observation ($n = 4$); effective use of technology ($n = 3$); and maintaining consistent practices between the music classroom and the homeroom classroom ($n = 1$).

In survey item 17, respondents were asked whether they had mentored a less experienced teacher. Over half of the respondents ($n = 263$, 56.9%) replied that they had mentored a less experienced teacher. Those who had not participated in such an experience numbered 199 (43.1%), with 11 respondents skipping the question.

Survey item 18 focused on younger teachers, asking respondents if a more experienced teacher had mentored them. It was the last survey item related to research question number one. The majority of teachers ($n = 283$, 61.3%) had been mentored by more experienced teachers, while just over one-third of the respondents ($n = 179$, 38.7%) had not participated in such an experience. Again, 11 respondents skipped this question.

Research Question Two

Research question two dealt with perceived barriers to professional growth: “What do Nebraska music teachers perceive to be barriers to their professional growth?” Survey items related to this research question were items three, six, seven, and nine.

Survey question three asked: “To what extent is each of the following factors a barrier to your participation in continuing education experiences?” Respondents were asked to rate the following barriers along a five-point Likert scale: Locations for professional growth opportunities are too distant from where I live/work, Lack of time, Lack of money, Family obligations, Lack of support by local school district, Discouragement by other staff, Lack of support from administration, Lack of available courses, or Lack of incentives. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the barrier according to the following scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) No Opinion, (4) Agree, or (5) Strongly Agree. Results for this item are illustrated in Table 21.

Table 21
Frequency and Mean Ratings for Professional Growth Survey Item 3: Barriers to Professional Growth

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Mean
Lack of money	19	72	29	206	148	3.83
Lack of time	17	70	22	257	108	3.78
Family obligations	31	88	71	199	85	3.46
Locations for professional growth opportunities are too distant from where I live/work.	46	166	45	163	54	3.03
Lack of incentives	43	141	96	158	36	3.01
Lack of available courses	45	165	81	153	30	2.91
Lack of support by local school district	73	207	82	76	36	2.57
Lack of support from administration	132	212	58	50	22	2.19
Discouragement by other staff	196	207	56	11	4	1.78

The results of survey item three were analyzed by descriptive statistics, as displayed in Table 22. The top three barriers identified by the respondents in this survey item were *Lack of money*, *Lack of time*, and *Family obligations*. Additional discussion on these items will take place in Chapter Five.

Table 22

Descriptive Statistics for Professional Growth Survey Item 3: Barriers to Professional Growth

Barrier	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Lack of money	473	3.8288	1.14715
Lack of time	473	3.7822	1.06621
Family obligations	473	3.4630	1.17315
Distance	473	3.0296	1.24157
Lack of incentives	473	3.0063	1.14146
Lack of available courses	473	2.9112	1.14080
Lack of support by local school district	473	2.5666	1.15545
Lack of support from administration	473	2.1924	1.09843
Discouragement by other staff	473	1.7738	.80622

Survey item six asked if the local school district provided professional development (PD) opportunities specific to music teaching and learning. More than half of the respondents ($n = 268$) indicated that their local professional growth offerings were not specific to music teaching and learning. Just over two-fifths of the respondents ($n = 199$) indicated that they received local professional growth offerings that were specific to music teaching and learning.

As a continuation of survey item six, survey item seven asked respondents to offer free response to what types of professional development opportunities their school district supports/offers. The 468 respondents offered a large variety of responses, which the researcher grouped according to similar themes and topics. The following topics regarding professional growth offered at the local level received ten or more comments from respondents: support for attendance professional conferences, such as Nebraska State Bandmasters Association, Nebraska Music Educators Association, Nebraska Choral

Directors Association, Great Plains Orff Chapter, and Kodaly ($n = 113$); general curriculum-related topics ($n = 101$); technology ($n = 56$); language arts ($n = 54$); music-related, including music Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) ($n = 47$); all staff in-services/professional growth ($n = 46$); workshops and in-service training sessions sponsored by Education Service Units ($n = 30$); no in-service training offered or the respondents could not recall any being offered ($n = 25$); school goal oriented development in services ($n = 20$); classroom management and related topics ($n = 14$); teachers in the district teaching workshops ($n = 14$); behavior management/strategies ($n = 12$); support for graduate classes ($n = 12$); and differentiated instruction ($n = 10$).

Selected comments from respondents regarding local in-services appear below:

- Professional Development is 99% of the time geared towards improving reading/writing scores and district/state assessments.
- We have monthly music meetings where staff meet to discuss teaching strategies. We used to have an outside professional come once a year specifically for music educators but because of funding shortage it was discontinued. We have maybe a half day to get together K-12 to address district curriculum.
- My present administration has aloud and encouraged me to attend workshops, conferences and conventions. The past 2 years they have paid for my NMEA dues and convention registration.
- During in-service days, there are opportunities to learn about assessments, smart board techniques, etc. but very rarely is there something specific to music available. We have had opportunities to

meet with our department and set goals and objectives for the year, beyond that, nothing much.

- My District is getting a little better. The elementary music staff is now being allowed to meet together. Before we had to sit through math, language arts, etc., implementations, which had relatively nothing to do with us.
- Our district offers district wide professional growth events that are not curriculum specific and are not very well planned.
- In-services that are not related to my content area OR grade level. All teachers in the district at all levels go through the exact same in-service.

Knowing that support of the local school district is important to the teachers' choices in professional growth opportunities, survey item number nine asked respondents to choose how their school district supports their choices in professional growth. The seeming lack of support in an area could be perceived as a barrier. Respondents were asked to choose from the following, selecting all that applied: *The school pays for the professional growth endeavor or reimburses me, Verbal support and encouragement, Discretionary professional growth days (release time), Paying for a substitute teacher while away for professional growth, Tuition for graduate studies, Not at all, or Other.* Table 23 displays the frequency and percentages for this survey item.

Table 23

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item 9: School District Support for Professional Growth Choices

Answer Options	Frequency	Percentage
Paying for a substitute teacher while away for professional growth	345	73.7%
Discretionary professional growth days (release time)	289	61.8%
Verbal support and encouragement	283	60.5%
The school pays for the professional growth endeavor or reimburses me	231	49.4%
Other (please specify)	48	10.3%
Tuition for graduate studies	33	7.1%
Not at all	32	6.8%
Skipped Question	6	

Support from the local school district is important to teachers who take part in professional growth activities, especially when the activities take place during the school year. Almost three-fourths of the respondents ($n = 345$) said that their local school district pays for a substitute teacher while they are away for professional growth activities. Professional growth days (release time) were another highly valued method of support for 289 respondents (61.8%). The third top method of support reported by teachers was that of verbal support and encouragement ($n = 283$).

Respondents who chose *Other* were asked to specify the manner of support using a free response format. The 48 respondents commented on various topics, not all of which were related to school district support of professional growth opportunities. Applicable comments were grouped according to common thematic material by the researcher, yielding the following results: reimbursement for a portion of tuition or

registration fee ($n = 9$), conference registrations are paid ($n = 5$), some financial assistance is available from time to time ($n = 4$), “bump up” on the pay scale ($n = 2$), district activities occur during duty hours ($n = 2$), required as part of contract ($n = 2$), school district sets days for professional growth ($n = 1$), pay for dues for membership in professional organizations ($n = 1$), reimbursement for travel if school vehicle is unavailable ($n = 1$), board funded scholarships available for continuing education ($n = 1$), tuition credit ($n = 1$), and use of school vehicle when possible ($n = 1$).

Research Question Three

Research question three dealt with how professional growth is defined by Nebraska music educators: “How do Nebraska music teachers define worthwhile professional growth opportunities?” Survey items related to this research question were items 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16, 19, 20, and 21. The results were analyzed with descriptive statistics. Research question one dealt with those professional growth opportunities that Nebraska music educators are currently utilizing. Research question three delves deeper into defining how it is that Nebraska music educators define worthwhile professional growth opportunities, which may or may not be those opportunities they are currently utilizing.

Survey item two was similar in nature to survey item one; however, the wording was altered to reflect the respondents’ preferences for professional growth: “What is your preferred choice for a professional growth experience? Please select your top choice.” Options offered included *Continuing education* (this can be in the form of workshops, seminars, home-study or online courses, conferences, or hands-on training), *Participating in local school district in-services*, *Journal-keeping*, *Attending professional conferences*,

Mentoring another teacher, Being mentored by another teacher, Being observed by an administrator or another teacher/colleague, Graduate studies, or Other. Table 24 represents the frequency and percentage of the respondents based on respondents' top choices of the aforementioned options.

Table 24

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item 2: Preferred Choices for Professional Growth Choices

Professional Growth Choices	Frequency	Percentage
Attending professional conferences	201	42.5%
Continuing education	172	36.4%
Graduate studies	52	11.0%
Being mentored by another teacher	23	4.9%
Participating in local school district in-services.	10	2.1%
Being observed by an administrator or another teacher/colleague	8	1.7%
Mentoring another teacher	7	1.5%
Journal-keeping	0	0.0%
Other	10	

Respondents who selected *Other* for survey item two ($n = 10$), offered feedback in a free response format. Responses included: independent study, talking/studying with other colleagues, hands-on training and traveling to other places to get a new perspective, workshops that are led from an individual from outside the state (or better yet, the country) who has a different perspective and experience to share, involvement as clinician for vocal or choral events, National Board Certification, self study, private study on a variety of instruments, and reading professional journals and conferencing with other teachers.

Survey item number four asked respondents to choose professional growth opportunities defined as short-term or long-term: “Professional growth opportunities can be short term, such as a one-day seminar, conference topic, or discussion. They can also be long-term, such as an ongoing discussion group or focused work. For each purpose for professional development listed below, indicate your preference for participation.” Table 25 illustrates the frequency and percentages showing how respondents defined their preference for the following topics as short-term opportunities, long-term opportunities, both short-term and long-term opportunities, or neither short-term nor long-term opportunities: Update music education knowledge; Pursue an area of professional interest; Improve practical skills, such as teaching, assessing, curriculum planning, administrative tasks, etc.; Improve performance in present position; Prepare for another position; Accomplish personal goals; or Equip yourself to help your local school or school district to reach its Goals.

Table 25

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item Four: Professional Growth Preferences as Short-Term, Long-Term, Both Short-Term and Long-Term, Neither Short-Term nor Long-Term

Classification	Frequency	% of Total Returned
Update Music Education Knowledge		
Short-Term	123	26.0
Long-Term	47	9.9
Both Short and Long	302	63.8
Neither Short nor Long	1	.2
Pursue an Area of Professional Interest		
Short-Term	116	24.5
Long-Term	115	24.3
Both Short and Long	232	49.0
Neither Short nor Long	10	2.1
Improve Practical Skills		
Short-Term	170	35.9
Long-Term	72	15.2
Both Short and Long	225	47.6
Neither Short nor Long	6	1.3
Improve Performance in Present Position		
Short-Term	136	28.8
Long-Term	96	20.3
Both Short and Long	237	50.1
Neither Short nor Long	4	0.8
Prepare for Another Position		
Short-Term	106	22.4
Long-Term	93	19.7
Both Short and Long	135	28.5
Neither Short nor Long	139	29.4
Accomplish Personal Goals		
Short-Term	58	12.3
Long-Term	92	19.5
Both Short and Long	308	65.1
Neither Short nor Long	15	3.2
Equip Self to Help Local School or District Reach Its Goals		
Short-Term	96	20.3
Long-Term	84	17.8
Both Short and Long	261	55.2
Neither Short nor Long	32	6.8

In survey item five, respondents were asked: “Indicate the likelihood that you will participate in the following kinds of professional growth opportunities in the next three years.” Respondents were presented with the options similar to those presented in survey items one and two: *Continuing education* (this can be in the form of workshops, seminars, home-study or online courses, conferences, or hands-on training), *Local school district in-services*, *Journal-keeping*, *Professional conferences*, *Mentoring*, *Observations*, and *Graduate Studies*. Respondents were asked to predict their likelihood to participate in these professional growth opportunities according to a Likert scale, where the choices were (1) Not at All Likely to (5) Very Likely. Table 26 represents the frequency and percentage of the respondents based on those choices for future professional growth opportunities.

Table 26

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item Five: Likelihood to Participate in Professional Growth Opportunities in the Next Three Years

Classification	Frequency	% of Total Returned
Continuing Education		
Not at All Likely	10	2.1
Not Very Likely	16	3.4
Neutral	8	1.7
Somewhat Likely	100	21.1
Very Likely	339	71.7
Local School District In-services		
Not at All Likely	11	2.3
Not Very Likely	7	1.5
Neutral	21	4.4
Somewhat Likely	48	10.1
Very Likely	387	81.6
Journal-keeping		
Not at All Likely	134	28.3
Not Very Likely	201	42.5
Neutral	82	17.3
Somewhat Likely	36	7.6
Very Likely	20	4.2

(table continues)

Table 26 (continued)

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item Five: Likelihood to Participate in Professional Growth Opportunities in the Next Three Years

Classification	Frequency	% of Total Returned
Professional Conferences		
Not at All Likely	6	1.3
Not Very Likely	20	4.2
Neutral	17	3.6
Somewhat Likely	104	22.0
Very Likely	326	68.9
Mentoring		
Not at All Likely	31	6.6
Not Very Likely	92	19.5
Neutral	82	17.3
Somewhat Likely	152	32.1
Very Likely	116	24.5
Observations		
Not at All Likely	13	2.7
Not Very Likely	37	7.8
Neutral	34	7.2
Somewhat Likely	165	34.9
Very Likely	224	47.4
Graduate Studies		
Not at All Likely	81	17.1
Not Very Likely	107	22.6
Neutral	54	11.4
Somewhat Likely	95	20.1
Very Likely	136	28.8

Realizing that many teachers participate in the in-service sessions offered by their local school districts, survey item eight asked respondents to rate the professional development opportunities offered by their local school district as Not Useful, Somewhat Useful, Useful, Quite Useful, or Extremely Useful. Table 27 illustrates the respondents' frequencies and percentages for their ratings. Interestingly, the frequencies and percentages created their own rank ordering.

Table 27

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item Eight: Rating of Professional Growth Opportunities Offered by Local School District

Answer Options	Frequency	Percentage
Somewhat useful	216	46.2%
Not useful	96	20.5%
Useful	96	20.5%
Quite useful	45	9.6%
Extremely useful	15	3.2%
Skipped Question	6	

Survey item 16 asked respondents to rate the usefulness of journal-keeping as a professional growth opportunity, using the descriptors Not Useful, Somewhat Useful, Useful, Quite Useful, or Extremely Useful. Table 28 illustrates the respondents' frequencies and percentages for their ratings.

Table 28

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item Eight: Rating of Usefulness of Journal-keeping

Answer Options	Frequency	Percentage
Somewhat Useful	223	48.3
Not Useful	111	24.0
Useful	93	20.1
Quite Useful	28	6.1
Extremely Useful	7	1.5
Skipped Question	11	

Addressing the idea of a mentor/mentee relationship, identified as a type of professional growth opportunity utilized by Nebraska music educators, survey item 19 asked respondents to identify in a free response format the purpose(s) a teacher would have for entering into a mentor/mentee partnership. The 462 respondents replied with a wide variety of comments. The researcher categorized the comments in broad groupings that explain the purposes behind entering into a mentor/mentee relationship: for support, encouragement, and idea sharing ($n = 144$); to become a better teacher or conductor ($n = 105$); to help the mentee learn more about school or district goals, expectations, and procedures ($n = 101$); to benefit from the experience of a more experienced teacher ($n = 84$); growth for both teachers ($n = 65$); to make use of the other party as a sounding board ($n = 57$); to build relationships/collaboration ($n = 52$); it is required by the school or the district for new teachers to have a mentor ($n = 14$); a break from isolation often experienced as a music educator ($n = 5$); the district gives a pay incentive to be a mentor ($n = 2$). Several exemplary comments are listed below from respondents who supplied free response answers:

- A teacher in a brand new job who is fresh out of college would find this useful. There are quite a few things that are not really taught in a classroom setting, that you just have to go out into the teaching world and learn. That situation is scary and to have an experienced teacher there to help along the way provides that sense of support.
- Teachers would want to be in a mentor/mentee partnership because both parties grow during this time. As an educator who has received

plenty of support in my first few years, I want to give back to the music education community by helping another teacher.

- As a new teacher, establishing a relationship with a veteran teacher can help keep the new teacher in the profession! (I speak from experience on THAT one.) Also, as a veteran teacher, you have a wealth of knowledge and experiences that you can share with someone just starting out, providing them with different ways of thinking about and doing things. (I speak from experience here, also.)
- Being mentored helps you stay on track and allows you to have someone that you can go to quickly when you need advice about a lesson or classroom management. Being a mentor allows you the opportunity to share what you are doing and help a more inexperienced teacher get settled in and feel comfortable in their work setting.
- Having a mentor is very beneficial. It is especially great in your very first year of teaching, and in your first year at a new school even with having prior teaching experience. There are lots of questions that need to be asked and answered in the first year at a new school. Mentors can also learn a lot from a mentee, and feel good about themselves for helping a fellow teacher!
- I once taught at a smaller district where I was the only instrumental teacher. These positions need to have a mentor/mentee partnership to allow for communication from colleagues more often than the yearly conference.

Table 29

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item 20: Rating of How Likely Respondents Would Participate in Given Professional Growth Opportunities

Answer Options	Not at All Likely	Not Very Likely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Rating Average
Elementary General Music Methodology	123 (26.7%)	75 (16.3%)	28 (6.1%)	90 (19.5%)	145 (31.5%)	3.13
Middle School General Music	105 (22.8%)	95 (20.6%)	47 (10.2%)	122 (26.5%)	92 (20.0%)	3.00
Instrumental Music Methods for Strings	245 (53.1%)	99 (21.5%)	36 (7.8%)	41 (8.9%)	40 (8.7%)	1.98
Instrumental Music Methods for Jazz Band	205 (44.5%)	81 (17.6%)	31 (6.7%)	69 (15.0%)	75 (16.3%)	2.41
Instrumental Music Methods for Marching Band	206 (44.7%)	80 (17.4%)	32 (6.9%)	73 (15.8%)	70 (15.2%)	2.39
Instrumental Music Methods for Concert Band	174 (37.7%)	54 (11.7%)	28 (6.1%)	73 (15.8%)	132 (28.6%)	2.86
Instrumental Music Repair	156 (33.8%)	56 (12.1%)	33 (7.2%)	98 (21.3%)	118 (25.6%)	2.93
Instrumental Music Other	164 (35.6%)	53 (11.5%)	115 (24.9%)	68 (14.8%)	61 (13.2%)	2.59
Music Technology	7 (1.5%)	21 (4.6%)	28 (6.1%)	186 (40.3%)	219 (47.5%)	4.28
Choral Music (all levels)	63 (13.7%)	38 (8.2%)	30 (6.5%)	119 (25.8%)	211 (45.8%)	3.82
World/Multicultural Music	37 (8.0%)	46 (10.0%)	68 (14.8%)	191 (41.4%)	119 (25.8%)	3.67
Music History	48 (10.4%)	74 (16.1%)	104 (22.6%)	165 (35.8%)	70 (15.2%)	3.29
Music Theory	47 (10.2%)	65 (14.1%)	91 (19.7%)	173 (37.5%)	85 (18.4%)	3.40
Assessment (Music)	23 (5.0%)	26 (5.6%)	57 (12.4%)	208 (45.1%)	147 (31.9%)	3.93
Integrating Music with Other Subjects	19 (4.1%)	38 (8.2%)	75 (16.3%)	202 (43.8%)	127 (27.5%)	3.82
Differentiated Learning	27 (5.9%)	47 (10.2%)	87 (18.9%)	192 (41.6%)	108 (23.4%)	3.67
Classroom Management Techniques	35 (7.6%)	29 (6.3%)	69 (15.0%)	207 (44.9%)	121 (26.2%)	3.76

Table 29 shows how respondents rated these activities: Elementary General Music Methodology (Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze, etc.), Middle School General Music, Instrumental Music Methods for Strings, Instrumental Music Methods for Jazz Band, Instrumental Music Methods for Marching Band, Instrumental Music Methods for Concert Band, Instrumental Music Repair, Instrumental Music Other, Music Technology (particularly the use of electronic devices and computer software to facilitate playback, recording, composition, storage, and performance), Choral Music (all levels), World/Multicultural Music, Music History, Music Theory, Assessment (Music), Integrating Music with Other Subjects, Differentiated Learning, and Classroom Management Techniques. When completing survey item 20, respondents were asked to rate how likely it would be that they would participate in various professional development activities using a Likert scale from (1) Not at All Likely to (5) Very Likely.

Table 30 displays the descriptive statistics for survey item number 20.

Table 30

Descriptive Statistics for Professional Growth Survey Item 20: Rating of How Likely Respondents Would Participate in Given Professional Growth Opportunities

Professional Growth Opportunity	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Elementary General Music Methodology	461	1.00	5.00	3.1280	1.63484
Middle School General Music	461	1.00	5.00	3.0022	1.47810

(table continues)

Table 30 (continued)

Descriptive Statistics for Professional Growth Survey Item 20: Rating of How Likely Respondents Would Participate in Given Professional Growth Opportunities

Professional Growth Opportunity	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Instrumental Music Methods for Strings	461	1.00	5.00	1.9848	1.32279
Instrumental Music Methods for Jazz Band	461	1.00	5.00	2.4100	1.55306
Instrumental Music Methods for Marching Band	461	1.00	5.00	2.3948	1.53803
Instrumental Music Methods for Concert Band	461	1.00	5.00	2.8590	1.70793
Instrumental Music Repair	461	1.00	5.00	2.9262	1.64680
Instrumental Music Other	461	1.00	5.00	2.5857	1.43092
Music Technology	461	1.00	5.00	4.2777	.88276
Choral Music (all levels)	461	1.00	5.00	3.8178	1.43307
World/Multicultural Music	461	1.00	5.00	3.6703	1.19226
Music History	461	1.00	5.00	3.2928	1.20818
Music Theory	461	1.00	5.00	3.3991	1.22701
Assessment (Music)	461	1.00	5.00	3.9328	1.05595
Integrating Music with Other Subjects	461	1.00	5.00	3.8243	1.05374
Differentiated Learning	461	1.00	5.00	3.6659	1.11760
Classroom Management Techniques	461	1.00	5.00	3.7592	1.13662

Table 31

Frequency and Percentages for Professional Growth Survey Item 21: Rating of Agreement with Belief Statements Concerning Professional Development

Belief Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average
Professional development can improve student learning.	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (3.3%)	250 (54.2%)	195 (42.3%)	4.38
Professional development improves my skills.	0 (0.0%)	5 (1.1%)	51 (11.1%)	293 (63.6%)	112 (24.3%)	4.11
I recognize and manage my own professional development needs.	4 (0.9%)	19 (4.1%)	61 (13.2%)	277 (60.1%)	100 (21.7%)	3.98
Professional development is a valuable use of my time.	3 (0.7%)	16 (3.5%)	76 (16.5%)	264 (57.3%)	102 (22.1%)	3.97
I actively pursue professional growth activities.	5 (1.1%)	27 (5.9%)	73 (15.8%)	227 (49.2%)	129 (28.0%)	3.97
I recognize and appropriately communicate my weaknesses.	1 (0.2%)	22 (4.8%)	54 (11.7%)	338 (73.3%)	46 (10.0%)	3.88
I recognize and appropriately communicate my strengths.	2 (0.4%)	25 (5.4%)	68 (14.8%)	310 (67.2%)	56 (12.1%)	3.85
Professional development activities are enjoyable.	2 (0.4%)	24 (5.2%)	98 (21.3%)	271 (58.8%)	66 (14.3%)	3.81
I am satisfied with my current skills as a music educator.	13 (2.8%)	114 (24.7%)	114 (24.7%)	194 (42.1%)	26 (5.6%)	3.23

Table 31 illustrates the respondents' ratings of these statements: (1) Professional development activities are enjoyable. (2) Professional development improves my skills. (3) Professional development is a valuable use of my time. (4) I am satisfied with my current skills as a music educator. (5) I recognize and appropriately communicate my

strengths. (6) I recognize and appropriately communicate my weaknesses. (7)

Professional development can improve student learning. (8) I recognize and manage my own professional development needs. (9) I actively pursue professional growth activities.

The final part of research question three was addressed in survey item 21. Respondents were asked to rate statements regarding their general beliefs concerning professional development using a Likert scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree.

Table 32 displays the descriptive statistics associated with survey item 21. Scores are presented in ranked order, from highest to lowest Mean score.

Table 32

Descriptive Statistics for Professional Growth Survey Item 21: Rating of Agreement with Belief Statements Concerning Professional Development

Belief Statement	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Professional development can improve student learning.	461	1.00	5.00	4.3839	.57302
Professional development improves my skills.	461	2.00	5.00	4.1106	.62094
I recognize and manage my own professional development needs.	461	1.00	5.00	3.9761	.77000
I actively pursue professional growth activities.	461	1.00	5.00	3.9718	.87803
Professional development is a valuable use of my time.	461	1.00	5.00	3.9675	.76402
I recognize and appropriately communicate my weaknesses.	461	1.00	5.00	3.8807	.64343
I recognize and appropriately communicate my strengths.	461	1.00	5.00	3.8525	.71013
Professional development activities are enjoyable.	461	1.00	5.00	3.8134	.75463
I am satisfied with my current skills as a music educator.	461	1.00	5.00	3.2299	.97760

Research Question Four

The fourth research question sought to relate the years of experience of the music teacher to the professional growth choices made by the teacher. Survey items included 2, 5, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 26. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to see if there was difference in the average likelihood of participating in professional growth opportunities based on years of experience, as displayed in Table 33.

By collapsing the participants' responses regarding various professional growth types from survey question five, a one-way ANOVA could be used to test for differences in the average likelihood of participation. Collapsing all types created a single indicator of the likelihood to participate in any kind of professional development. Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) was performed as a post hoc test to the ANOVA, yielding results that showed significant difference between groupings of years of experience: 1-7 years of experience ($M = 4.14$), 8-15 years of experience ($M = 3.82$), and more than 15 years of experience ($M = 3.68$). Notably, the significant differences placed those with 1-7 years of experience in a professional growth track that saw more activity than the other two groups. The teachers with 8-15 years of experience were higher in their professional growth activity participation than the teachers with more than 15 years of experience. The nature of the relationships of main effects was determined using the Tukey HSD test of pairwise comparisons.

Table 33

Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Group Type Years of Experience

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between Groups	17.620	2	8.810	28.931	.000
Within Groups	138.862	456	.305		
Total	156.483	458			

Research Question Five

Research question five sought to find a relationship between the area of teacher certification, the area of teaching assignment (general, choral, instrumental), or grade level assignment and the kind of professional growth choices made by music teachers. Three, one-way analysis of variance procedures (ANOVAs) were used to test this relationship. As indicated earlier, participants' responses regarding various professional growth types were collapsed from survey question five to obtain a single indicator of the likelihood to participate in any kind of professional development.

Table 34 displays the results of the ANOVA to detect differences in the average likelihood a respondent will participate in professional growth opportunities by the area of teaching assignment. Teaching area possibilities were General ($M = 3.86$), Vocal ($M = 3.86$), Instrumental ($M = 3.79$), General-Vocal ($M = 3.88$), General-Instrumental ($M = 3.99$), Vocal-Instrumental ($M = 3.71$), and General-Vocal-Instrumental ($M = 3.79$). Results indicate that there is no difference in likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by teaching area (general, choral, instrumental), $F(1, 457) = .0433$, $p = .8352$.

Table 34

Summary of ANOVA to detect differences in the average of likelihood a subject will participate in professional growth opportunities by the teaching assignment

Groups	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i> value	<i>Pr(>F)</i>
Teaching Area	1	0.015	0.01483	0.0433	0.8352
Residuals	457	156.468	0.34238		

Table 35

Summary of ANOVA to detect differences in the average of likelihood a subject will participate in professional growth opportunities by the grade level assignment.

Group	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i> value	<i>Pr(>F)</i>
Grade Level	1	0.101	0.10081	0.2946	0.5875
Residuals	457	156.382	0.34219		

Table 35 displays the results of the ANOVA to detect differences in the average likelihood a respondent will participate in professional growth opportunities by the area of grade level assignment. Grade level combinations included Grades K-5 ($M = 3.84$), Grades 6-8 ($M = 3.81$), Grades 9-12 ($M = 3.94$), K-8 ($M = 3.77$), Grades K-5 and 9-12 ($M = 4.04$), Grades 6-12 ($M = 3.87$), and Grades K-12 ($M = 3.80$). Results indicate that there is no difference in likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by grades taught, $F(1, 457) = .2946, p = .5875$.

Table 36

Summary of ANOVA to detect differences in the average of likelihood a subject will participate in professional growth opportunities by teacher certification.

Groups	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i> value	<i>Pr(>F)</i>
Teacher Certification	1	0.841	0.84133	2.4703	0.1167
Residuals	457	155.641	0.34057		

Table 36 displays the results of the ANOVA to detect differences in the average likelihood a respondent will participate in professional growth opportunities by teacher certification. Teacher certification possibilities included Field Endorsement ($M = 3.88$); General Music Endorsement ($M = 3.84$); Vocal Music Endorsement only ($M = 3.86$); Instrumental Music Endorsement only ($M = 3.83$); Field and General Music Endorsements ($M = 3.62$); Field and Vocal Music Endorsements ($M = 4.36$); Field and Instrumental Music Endorsements ($M = 3.86$); General and Vocal Music Endorsements ($M = 3.76$); General and Instrumental Music Endorsements ($M = 3.33$); Vocal and Instrumental Music Endorsements ($M = 3.38$); Field, General, and Instrumental Music Endorsements ($M = 3.81$); Field, Vocal, and Instrumental Endorsements ($M = 3.71$); General, Vocal, and Instrumental Endorsements ($M = 3.86$); and Field, General, Vocal, and Instrumental Endorsements ($M = 3.71$). Results indicate that there is no difference in likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by area of teaching certification $F(1, 457) = 2.4703, p = .1167$.

Research Question Six

Research question six sought to find a relationship between age, gender, highest degree held, and NSAA District and the kind of professional growth choices made by music teachers. Once again, participants' responses regarding various professional growth types were collapsed from survey question five to obtain a single indicator of the likelihood to participate in any kind of professional development. A t -test was used to see if there is a difference in the average likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by gender and by three one-way ANOVA respectively for age, NSAA District, and highest degree earned respectively.

Table 37

T-test of likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by gender.

Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>
Male	156	3.8828	.59347	.04752
Female	303	3.8185	.57964	.03330

Table 37 illustrates the results of the *t*-test to determine if there is a difference in the average likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by gender.

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was met based on results of Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance, as displayed in Table 38. There was not a significant difference in the scores between males ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .59$) and females ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.58$); $t(457) = 1.12$, $p = 0.269$.

Table 38

Summary of results of Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means			
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Equal variances assumed	.000	.985	1.117	457	.265	.06430	.05758	-.04886	.17747
Equal variances not assumed			1.108	306.673	.269	.06430	.05802	-.04987	.17847

Table 39

Descriptive Statistics for Age

Age	N	M	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
20-29	103	4.1914	.48157	.04745	4.0973	4.2855	2.57	5.00
30-39	90	3.9302	.51229	.05400	3.8229	4.0375	2.29	5.00
40-49	107	3.8024	.45921	.04439	3.7144	3.8904	2.57	4.71
50-59	129	3.6600	.55993	.04930	3.5625	3.7576	1.43	5.00
60+	30	3.2762	.82539	.15037	2.9687	3.5837	1.29	4.57
Total	459	3.8403	.58452	.02728	3.7867	3.8940	1.29	5.00

Table 39 displays the descriptive statistics for age (question 29).

Table 40 displays the summary of the ANOVA used to detect differences in the average likelihood a respondent will participate in professional growth opportunities by age.

Table 40

Summary of ANOVA to detect differences in the average of likelihood a subject will participate in professional growth opportunities by age.

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	27.316	4	6.829	24.003	.000
Within Groups	129.166	454	.285		
Total	156.483	458			

The nature of the relationships of main effects was determined using the Tukey HSD test of pairwise comparisons, as displayed in Table 42. This clearly shows the significant differences in the effect of the age groups on professional growth choices. There was a significant effect of age noticed at the $p < .05$ level, $F(4, 454) = 24.00, p < 0.001$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for 20-29-year-olds ($M = 4.19, SD = 0.48$) was significantly different than the 30-39-year olds ($M = 3.93, SD = 0.51$) and the 40-49-year-olds ($M = 3.80, SD = 0.46$) and the 50-59-year-olds ($M = 3.66, SD = 0.56$) and the 60-year-olds and older ($M = 3.28, SD = 0.82$). The Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for 30-39-year-olds ($M = 3.93, SD = 0.51$) was significantly different from the 50-59-year-olds ($M = 3.66, SD = 0.56$) and the 60-year-olds and older ($M = 3.28, SD = 0.82$). The Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for 40-49-year-olds ($M = 3.80, SD = 0.46$) was significantly different from the 60-year-olds and older ($M = 3.28, SD = 0.82$). The Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for 50-59-year-olds ($M = 3.66, SD = 0.56$) was significantly different from the 60-year-olds and older ($M = 3.28, SD = 0.82$). Taken together, these results suggest that age does have an effect on professional growth choices.

Table 41 displays the descriptive statistics for Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) District location.

Table 41

Descriptive Statistics for Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) District location

District	N	M	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
District 1	125	3.8549	.58283	.05213	3.7517	3.9580	1.29	5.00
District 2	79	3.8680	.58713	.06606	3.7365	3.9995	2.14	5.00
District 3	56	3.8852	.60451	.08078	3.7233	4.0471	1.43	5.00
District 4	76	3.8835	.53285	.06112	3.7617	4.0052	2.43	5.00
District 5	20	3.7786	.62093	.13884	3.4880	4.0692	2.57	4.71
District 6	25	3.7086	.63283	.12657	3.4474	3.9698	1.43	4.57
Total	381	3.8541	.58065	.02975	3.7957	3.9126	1.29	5.00

Table 42 displays the results of the one-way ANOVA to detect differences in the average likelihood a respondent will participate in professional growth opportunities based on Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) District location. There was not a significant effect of NSAA district location on choices of professional growth opportunities at the $p < .05$ level, $F(5, 375) = 0.459$, $p = 0.807$.

Table 42

Summary of One-Way ANOVA to detect differences in the average of likelihood a subject will participate in professional growth opportunities by NSAA District

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.779	5	.156	.459	.807
Within Groups	127.340	375	.340		
Total	128.119	380			

Table 43

Descriptive statistics for highest degree held

Degree	N	M	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Bachelor's	232	3.8781	.63381	.04161	3.7961	3.9601	1.29	5.00
Master's	220	3.7922	.53160	.03584	3.7216	3.8628	1.43	5.00
Doctorate	7	4.1020	.28229	.10670	3.8410	4.3631	3.57	4.43
Total	459	3.8403	.58452	.02728	3.7867	3.8940	1.29	5.00

Table 43 displays the descriptive statistics for highest degree earned.

Table 44 displays the results of the one-way ANOVA to detect differences in the average likelihood a respondent will participate in professional growth opportunities based on highest degree earned. There was not a significant effect of highest degree held on professional growth opportunities at the $p < .05$ level, $F(2, 456) = 1.94$, $p = 0.145$.

Table 44

Summary of One-Way ANOVA to detect differences in the average of likelihood a subject will participate in professional growth opportunities by highest degree earned.

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.320	2	.660	1.939	.145
Within Groups	155.163	456	.340		
Total	156.483	458			

Miscellaneous Response Item

The final survey item was not a required response item for participants; however, it was another opportunity for participants to share any thoughts they might have on professional growth with the researcher. A total of eighty-six (86) comments were made in a free response format, of which less than half were pertinent to professional growth. The extraneous remarks were disregarded, leaving thirty-eight (38) statements from respondents regarding their thoughts on professional growth.

Comments that were made in the final survey item were both positive and negative in nature, as can be seen when examining the comments in Appendix H. A number of the free response comments spoke of the lack of music-specific professional growth opportunities at the local level, especially in smaller schools and in remote areas of the state, decrying the general nature of the local offerings. Several comments centered around the importance of professional growth (development) in the respondent's professional life, citing their determination as the main factor for continued professional growth. Specific kinds of professional growth opportunities that were asked for included thorough education for band directors, training in Orff Schulwerk and the Kodály method, and education in current technology for use in the music classroom. The constraints of time and money were echoed in various responses, although these barriers appeared to be invalidated through certain pointed comments in which respondents stated unequivocally that teachers who want professional growth need to make it happen without excuses. The length of duration for professional growth opportunities was addressed in a few comments, stressing the value of long-term opportunities over short-term opportunities.

Summary

The data collected for the six research questions by the survey were analyzed in several ways. Descriptive statistics involving frequencies and percentages were used to describe demographic information provided by respondents.

Descriptive statistics were used to examine research question number one. This question investigated what kinds of professional growth opportunities are currently in use by Nebraska music educators. High among the options were continuing education (this can be in the form of workshops, seminars, home-study or online courses, conferences, or hands-on training) (90.3%) and participating in local school district in-services (89.2%).

Research question two was analyzed with descriptive statistics. This question investigated perceived barriers to music educators' professional growth. More than half the respondents (57.4%) said that their school district does not offer professional growth activities specific to music education. The top two barriers identified by music teachers were lack of money and lack of time.

Research question three was also analyzed with descriptive statistics. This question examined how Nebraska music educators define professional growth, realizing that the definition is more than likely tied to those activities in which they participate the most. Continuing education (36.4%) and attending professional conferences (42.5%) were the top preferences for professional growth. With teacher agreeing that professional growth is vital to their continuance in education, it should be noted that continuing education was cited as a top preference for professional growth opportunities (71.7%), along with local school district in-services events (81.6%), professional conferences (68.9%), and observations (47.4%).

Research question four was analyzed with was measured with a one-way ANOVA, followed by a Tukey post hoc analysis to determine if any significant differences were present between the various groupings of teachers' years of experience. This question pertained to years of experience having an impact on professional growth choices. An area of significance was noted when comparing teachers with 1-7 years of experience with teachers who have 8-15 years (.31551), this was not as great as the significant difference between teachers 1-7 years of experience and teachers with 15 or more years of experience (.45690).

Research Question 5, relating the teacher certification area, teaching assignment area, and grade level assignment to professional growth choices, was analyzed with three ANOVAs. Results indicate that there is no difference in likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by teaching area, $F(1, 457) = .0433, p = .8352$. Results indicate that there is no difference in likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by grades taught $F(1, 457) = .2946, p = .5875$. Results indicate that there is no difference in likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by area of teaching certification $F(1, 457) = 2.4703, p = .1167$.

Research Question 6, which dealt with demographic factors of age, gender, highest degree held, and NSAA District location, was analyzed with a t-test for gender, followed by three one-way ANOVAs for age, NSAA District, and highest degree earned. No significant impact was noticed for gender. The 20-29 year-olds were more likely to participate in professional growth than the other age groups.

Further discussion will be offered in the following chapter regarding each of the findings.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the kinds of professional growth activities employed by music teachers in the schools of Nebraska. This study sought to determine what kinds of professional growth opportunities music teachers feel they need to function as imaginative, creative professional educators capable of dealing with the complexities of music education in the 21st century.

Review of the Literature

A review of the literature focused on various factors related to professional growth in educators. This review of literature provides insights into professional growth opportunities utilized by music educators in various places. Most of the studies and articles reflect new perspectives on what professional growth means for educators in the early decades of the twenty-first century.

The preparation of music educators at the undergraduate level provides a basic preparation, but it cannot provide all of the necessary expertise that future music educators will need to employ throughout their careers. The undergraduate education of preservice music educators should be a precursor to their years as professionals in the field. Preparation for a lifetime of learning and growth is the responsibility of the undergraduate institution and the various cooperating schools and teachers with whom the preservice music educator comes in contact.

Teachers in the field have differing views on what constitutes professional growth. Through research done in the past several decades, it has become evident that teacher professional development needs are not all the same. Veteran music teachers appear to be open to professional growth opportunities that are informal and provide some kind of connection with other colleagues. While short-term experiences might seem favorable due to their concentrated focus and low amount of time invested, the research examined in the literature review points to the beneficial experiences as being more long-term in nature.

Teachers are expected by their school districts to stay current in their professional development, often for the purpose of maintaining their teaching certificates; however, the proper funding is not always in place in order to realize the professional development opportunity for the teachers. The future of school-funded professional growth is in question, given the recent economic downturn. On the other hand, professional growth opportunities will need to be available to teachers so that they can be nurtured in their careers. Welcome additions to professional growth opportunities for music educators might include workshops, post-baccalaureate classes, and master's degree classes that would deal with how to make music education culturally relevant in a society that is daily becoming increasingly diverse.

There are many different reasons for pursuing the various kinds of professional growth. Some reasons for pursuing growth opportunities include contractual obligations, state licensure requirements, and broadening of a teacher's knowledge base for personal reasons. Music educators, according to their schools' and states' expectations, as well as for personal reasons, are accomplishing professional growth.

Procedure

The data for this survey were obtained from a web-based survey developed by the researcher to acquire an understanding of professional growth opportunities utilized by Nebraska's music educators. Both broad and specific questions were asked. A link to the survey was sent to Nebraska music educators via email and was conducted entirely via the Internet.

The survey population consisted of Nebraska elementary, middle, and high school music educators. The sample consisted of those teachers whose email addresses were procured for the study from the 2009-2010 directory for the Nebraska Music Educators Association (NMEA) school district and building-specific websites. The initial invitational email was sent to the 1,243 email addresses culled from the NMEA directory and school websites; however, ninety-nine email addresses were no longer valid. The total number of valid participants was 1,144, of which 474 respondents started the survey, with 456 (96.2%) actually completing the survey, yielding a return rate of 39.9%.

Design of the Study

This study was a descriptive study, designed to analyze the current professional development practices of Nebraska music educators. A survey was conducted to retrieve data through a web-based survey developed by the researcher. This survey was divided into six sections. The first and sixth sections involved data gathered to determine overall opinions and preferences regarding professional growth. The second, third, fourth, and fifth sections dealt with various kinds of professional growth opportunities: school or district offerings and support, college (graduate) courses, observations, and alternative approaches, including journaling and mentoring. The last section of the survey contained

demographic information, gathered to ensure that respondents are representative of the population.

Results

The first research question dealt with the professional growth opportunities in use by Nebraska music educators over the past three years. Respondents reported that their foremost professional growth experience was continuing education, which could have been in the form of workshops, seminars, home study or online courses, conferences, or hands-on training. Participating in local school district in-service opportunities was close behind continuing education in reported use, followed by attending professional conferences. Observation by another teacher or by an administrator was the fourth-most reported professional growth experience. Results in the other categories quickly tapered from these high points. The other professional growth opportunities utilized over the past three years are presented in rank order: mentoring another teacher, graduate studies, being mentored by another teacher, other, and, finally, journal-keeping.

The second research question in this study was to determine the barriers to professional growth opportunities, as expressed by Nebraska music educators. Respondents cited lack of money, lack of time, and family obligations as the top three barriers to pursuing professional growth opportunities. Over half of the respondents said that their local school district did not offer music-specific in-service opportunities. Respondents were asked how their school district supported their professional growth endeavors. Almost three-fourths of the respondents said that their school district paid for a substitute teacher when they are away for a professional growth endeavor. Respondents also noted that their local district supported their professional growth endeavors by

allowing release time or professional growth days. Another way in which educators were supported at the local level was through verbal support and encouragement.

The third research question was to determine how Nebraska music educators define professional growth opportunities; that is, what do these teachers feel constitutes a valid professional growth endeavor? The top choices currently in use by respondents were attending professional conferences, continuing education, and graduate studies. Preferences for opportunities that were either short- or long-term, both short-term and long-term opportunities, or neither short-term nor long-term, included accomplishing personal goals, updating musical knowledge, and equipping oneself to accomplish school or district goals. When asked to predict their likelihood to participate in a variety of common professional growth activities in the next three years, respondents' topmost choices included local school district in-services, continuing education, and professional conferences. Respondents were also confronted with a larger set of less-than-customary professional growth choices and asked to rate the likelihood of their participation in them. New perspectives were noticed as respondents indicated desired attention in the following areas: music technology, assessment, choral music, integrating music with other subjects, classroom management, techniques in world/multicultural music, and differentiated learning. Finally, respondents were presented with belief statements regarding professional growth and asked to rate their level of agreement with the statements. The belief statements netting the highest responses were (1) professional development can improve student learning, (2) professional development improves my skills, (3) I recognize and manage my own professional development needs,

(4) professional development is a valuable use of my time, and (5) I actively pursue professional growth activities.

The fourth research question in this study was to determine if a teacher's years of experience had an impact on the teacher's professional growth choices. An area of significance was noted when comparing teachers with 1-7 years of experience with teachers who have 8-15 years; however, this was not as great as the significant difference between teachers 1-7 years of experience and teachers with 15 or more years of experience. There was a significant difference noted in that teachers with less experience had a higher tendency to pursue professional growth opportunities.

Research question five was to determine if a teacher's area of certification, teaching assignment (choral, instrumental, general, or a combination thereof), or grade level assignment would have an impact on the teacher's professional growth choices. Results indicated that there is no difference in the likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by area of teaching certification. Regarding teaching assignment (choral, instrumental, general, or a combination thereof), results indicated that there is no difference in the likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by teaching area. Finally, results indicated that there is no difference in the likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by grades taught.

The sixth research question was to determine if a teacher's age, gender, highest degree held, or Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) District location would have an impact on the teacher's professional growth choices. The results suggest that age does have an effect on professional growth choices. Specifically, the results suggest that when teachers reach more advanced years, they do not choose to participate in as many

professional growth opportunities as they did in their younger years. The results also suggest that gender does not have an effect on professional growth choices. There was not a significant effect of highest degree held on professional growth opportunities. Finally, there was not a significant effect of NSAA district location on choices of professional growth opportunities.

Discussion

Common Professional Growth Opportunities in Use

Nebraska's music educators are utilizing professional growth opportunities. A large percentage of the respondents to this study signified that they are taking part in continuing education opportunities, which might include workshops, seminars, home study or online courses, conferences, or hands-on training. The literature reviewed for this study pointed to the idea that long-term opportunities tend to bear more favorable results regarding retention of material and an impact on student learning. However, it was noticed in this study that Nebraska's music educators continue to utilize short-term opportunities, such as some of the previously mentioned opportunities that comprise the topic of continuing education.

The ubiquitous school district in-service program is another avenue that is used to achieve professional growth for music teachers, although, as will be discussed later, this is not always a favorable delivery option. Nevertheless, because of the mandatory nature of this method of delivery, a great majority of music teachers participate in these opportunities.

Professional conferences. Professional conferences, such as those offered by the Nebraska Music Educators Association (NMEA), the Nebraska State Bandmasters Association (NSBA), and the Nebraska Choral Directors Association (NCDA), are customarily claimed as professional growth, which comes as no surprise. Although the short-term nature of these conferences calls into question the possibility of any long-standing impact on the teacher or upon student learning, respondents claimed this method as one of their highest choices for achieving what they feel is professional growth.

The conferences that occur during the school year allow the teachers an opportunity to break away from their daily routines in order to recharge, renew, and refresh. The temporary escape from the everyday routine of the school day can, in itself, be refreshing, providing the teacher a chance to reflect upon what has been happening in the music classroom and what course of action needs to be charted for future success.

Teachers who present sessions at professional conferences find that preparing the presentation can be its own professional development, since the presenters must know their material in detail before presenting their session. This kind of preparation is different than the customary lesson preparation and requires a different kind of thought process that is able to broaden the teacher's insights and can enlighten their own teaching practice in their classroom.

Teachers attend conferences to learn new approaches and techniques in music education, to read through new music, to hear about research in music education, and to network with others in the profession. Due to the fact that music teachers are sometimes widespread across the state, they can feel isolated from others who are teaching the same subject. In some school districts, there is only one music teacher for the entire student

population, while there might be two English teachers, for instance. The opportunity to converse with others in the same discipline in order to share teaching ideas and to commiserate is beneficial to the improvement of teaching within the discipline. The peer-mentoring factor at such conferences is large in scope. Such conferences provide an occasion for veteran teachers to interact with novice teachers. The veteran teachers are observed as role models whom novice teachers emulate. The exchange of ideas between the veteran role models and the novices is beneficial to both parties and to the furtherance of the profession.

Observation. The use of observation as a professional growth tool can be viewed as a teacher-to-teacher exchange or as an administrator-to-teacher exchange. A minority of teachers observes colleagues within their discipline during the year. On the other hand, an overwhelming majority of participants reported being observed at least once during the school year by an administrator. The reflective practice that can be tied to observations, along with the constructive criticisms from the administrators, can be helpful for improving teaching practice, with the ultimate beneficiaries of the improvement being the students within the classroom. Teachers who observe a colleague in their own classroom have gleaned beneficial material for use in their own classroom. This is true whether the other teacher is a music teacher, a regular classroom teacher, or a teacher in another discipline. Music teachers who have observed another teacher have gathered helpful information regarding behavior/classroom management; alternative approaches/strategies to teaching a specific concept; ideas for the classroom, including lesson plans, games, songs, and warm-ups; classroom organization and procedures; acceptable and unacceptable teaching practices; awareness, pacing, sequencing; basic

student support, such as answering of questions, advice, encouragement, motivation; meeting a variety of learning styles; rehearsal techniques; how to engage students; conducting style; how students from the music classroom interact in another classroom; effective use of technology; and maintaining consistent practices between the music classroom and the homeroom classroom.

Graduate classes. Music educators in Nebraska do take part in graduate studies in the name of professional growth on a somewhat limited basis, with just over one-third of the respondents taking part in graduate studies at some point in their teaching career. Reasons for pursuing graduate studies were varied, but the topmost reason expressed was for salary advancement. The earning of an advanced degree was the second highest reason for pursuing graduate studies. Other reasons for participating in graduate studies included a personal desire, to keep current on educational practices, or for tenure requirements. Music educators often take graduate classes in the area of music, music education, or general education.

Graduate classes offered in the summers for music educators should have relevance to the teachers' professional life, and may not necessarily be a part of a graduate program. Teachers have been known to take a smattering of courses in *à la carte* fashion in order to satisfy their personal desires or in order to fulfill school district requirements. There are teachers who take graduate classes in such a manner that they accumulate numerous graduate hours without converting the credit hours into a graduate degree. Often times, the *à la carte* method does not accumulate credit hours in a way that will fulfill any kind of post baccalaureate degree requirements.

As frequently happens, music educators who earn their master's degree do not

continue to seek graduate studies as a means for professional growth after their degree is completed. The feeling of accomplishment in finishing the master's degree satiates the longing for any additional studies. This sense of satisfaction could stem from the accomplishment of a personal or professional goal, and, having thus attained the goal, the educators feel that they have achieved all that they are able to achieve. Additional hours beyond the master's degree do not always receive financial recognition by a school district, meaning the additional hours are not rewarded by an increase in salary. To some, pursuing additional graduate credit hours beyond a master's degree is throwing away money on college costs that could be spent on necessities or on other desirables.

Mentoring and networking. The furthering of collegial relationships through a mentor-mentee relationship is not as prevalent in Nebraska as in other places, although there are instances within Nebraska where this relationship is deliberately established through the school or the school district in the interest of promoting the success of the novice teacher or the teacher new to the building or the district. Just over one-third of the respondents had served as mentors to another teacher. Interestingly, not quite one-fifth of the respondents responded that they had been a mentee at some point in their career.

The lack of prevalence in mentoring among music teachers in Nebraska could be explained by the sparse population of music teachers in the state, especially in the western two-thirds of the state where there is often only one music educator per school district who teaches all music classes from kindergarten through grade 12. The lack of another nearby colleague in the music discipline can leave administrators scrambling to attach this outlier of a teacher to someone with a similar discipline, pairing the music teacher with a veteran English teacher because the administrator feels that such a pairing

would be less objectionable than pairing the music teacher with a math teacher. Whereas even a small school district might have two English teachers or two math teachers who could be similarly paired in a mentoring relationship, the sole music educator is sometimes lumped with other specialist-type teachers and assigned to whomever wants a new mentee.

Intentional mentoring relationships need to be established for music educators. The Nebraska Music Educators Association and the Nebraska Choral Directors Association have made strides in offering mentorship programs, especially geared toward teachers who are new to the teaching field and are within the first five years of their careers. While it might be that not all young music educators in this program feel that they have an official, intentional mentor, there are multiple individuals within each professional organization who are ready to assist young teachers.

The use of email and technologies such as Skype can be effective in breaking the barrier of distance, thereby alleviating some of the feelings of isolation felt by many music teachers. Mentors can guide mentees into new ways of thinking, assisting them in intangible ways although they might be separated by hundreds of miles.

Journaling and reflective practice. While journaling is being relied upon as a method of reflective practice in several areas of the country, including undergraduate music education programs, this tool for professional growth is relatively untapped in Nebraska. Less than ten percent of the respondents stated that they used journaling as a means for their professional growth. Perhaps this is due to hesitancy on the part of the educators to view journaling as professional growth. Journaling can be a time-consuming process, since the educator must formulate thoughts that are put on paper or into a word

processing document on the computer. The pressure to keep things moving during the school day does not always lend itself to sitting for a few minutes in order to write down reflections from one class before another class arrives for instruction. In addition, it could be that the idea of reflective practice is new to these teachers and there is reluctance on their part to try something that is out of the mainline in the area of professional growth. Not having seen the effectiveness of journaling, nor having been instructed in its practicality and use as means for reflective practice, educators are skeptical of something with which they are unfamiliar.

Creative approaches outside the traditional realm. Creative approaches to professional growth were noted from the free responses of the teachers who chose *Other* when asked to report their professional growth activities from the past three years. Unique approaches to professional growth that were cited included reading professional journals and books, supervising practicum students and student teachers, presenting at a conference, pursuing graduate studies and an endorsement in an entirely different field, achieving National Board Certification, participating in out-of-school ensembles, or attending Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings.

The reading of professional journals and books can be helpful in providing insights into current research in music education. Practitioner-based articles that bring helpful ideas for classroom practice can be latched onto easily, with the educator effecting change to affect student learning. While many professional journals do not promote themselves to be a replacement for other kinds of professional growth, educators are learning from the articles presented in the journals, hopefully broadening their backgrounds in order to better inform their teacher practices.

The supervision of practicum and student teachers can be a rewarding process for both the cooperating teacher and the preservice music educator in their charge. Cooperating teachers must continually think about why they do what they do, questioning themselves and their practices in order to be prepared to give an answer to their undergraduate practicum student or student teacher regarding educational methodology, classroom managements, educational philosophy, and so on. In order to offer constructive criticisms of their charges, veteran music educators must know what to expect in the classroom or rehearsal room, and the veterans should be the ones modeling the very things they desire to observe in their charges. This is not to say that the preservice teacher is the only one learning in this process. The veteran teachers should, through observation and conversation, be noticing new ideas and practices being brought forth by the preservice teachers. The exchange of ideas will be beneficial to both the veteran teacher and the preservice teacher, with the students in the classroom being the main beneficiaries of the growth that takes place.

Presenting at a conference, as previously mentioned, assures the presenter has done the necessary studying and preparation in order to provide a meaningful, educational session at a professional conference. Additionally, teachers presenting topics at the local level, such as in a PLC, can be on a similar preparation track, although perhaps not as exhaustive. The personal and professional growth from preparing a topic for discussion or for a professional conference can expand the presenter's background and thinking, affecting their teaching practice in their home environments.

While graduate studies were already discussed, it was done so in light of music education. To achieve a teaching endorsement in a discipline outside of music requires

the educator to learn a new skills set and perhaps to relearn some things from a different perspective. Again, this expands the teacher's knowledge base, promoting the growth of their background with the anticipation that the growth will affect student learning.

The rigors of undertaking National Board Certification can be daunting for the less-determined educator; however, for the motivated, determined educator, achieving National Board Certification provides the opportunity to examine one's teaching practice against the profession's highest standards. National Board Certification is an advanced teaching credential that complements a state's teacher license. National Board Certification is achieved upon successful completion of a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize effective and accomplished teachers who meet high standards based on what teachers should know and be able to do. As part of the certification process, candidates complete 10 assessments that are reviewed by trained teachers in their certificate areas. The process toward National Board Certification is undeniably an example of an extremely rigorous professional growth program.

For those teachers who participate in ensembles outside of the school day, they are able to observe another teacher leading the ensemble. Although the ensemble is almost certainly comprised of other adults, the leadership of the conductor or group leader can be considered in evaluating one's own teaching style with younger students. Membership in such an ensemble allows the educator to engage in a creative professional growth opportunity with other likeminded individuals, some of whom might also be professional music educators. The networking that comes through such group membership, along with the learning potential that flows from performing with such an ensemble, can be beneficial to the music educator.

Barriers to Professional Growth

When the respondents were asked to identify barriers to their professional growth, it became evident that the nature of the profession was partially at the basis of the perceived barriers. For instance, the lack of money to afford professional growth opportunities was expressed as the foremost barrier. It should be noted that Nebraska teachers are not paid as well as other teachers, based on a national average.

Nebraska ranked 38th in teacher salary in 2008 and 2009. The average teacher salary in Nebraska for 2009 was \$43,933, almost \$6,000 lower than the national average of \$49,720. In 2008, it was \$43,300, more than \$5,000 lower than the 2008 national average of \$48,353. The gap between the national average of teacher salaries and the average teacher salary in Nebraska has increased by \$1,000 a year. In terms of teacher salaries, Nebraska pays its teachers lower than the national average, and has done so for the past three years. This means that teacher salaries in Nebraska are increasing at low enough levels that the gap between the state and the nation is increasing. (Teacher Salary Info, 2010)

During a time when our country is witnessing economic downturns and school districts are cutting budgets and music positions, teachers seem to be carefully weighing their professional growth options, especially when they are the ones paying for the professional growth opportunity. Teachers who are already cash-strapped because of being underpaid do not desire to burden themselves additionally by financing their professional growth.

Teachers also cited a general lack of time as another primary reason for not seeking professional growth opportunities, closely followed by family obligations. Due to the time-consuming nature of the teaching profession, the free time that comes to the teacher during school breaks is often viewed as personal time or family time, and the encroachment of professional growth opportunities into that sphere of personal or family space is seen as a violation of the separation of home life from professional life. How a person manages the time available for work, personal time, family time, and professional growth is an individual, personal decision. The same amount of time is allotted to everyone, but how the individual determines how that time is used.

The locations for professional growth are sometimes too distant from where the teachers live and work, which makes travel necessary, further stretching the already limited budget of the music teacher. In a state where more than two-thirds of the total population resides in the eastern third of the state, it is customary to see professional growth opportunities being offered with greater regularity in the major cities, such as Lincoln and Omaha, although college towns such as Kearney, Peru, Chadron, and Wayne could also be venues for such opportunities. Teachers who cited distance as a barrier are possibly considering the time and cost to drive to the venue of the professional growth opportunity, the time length of the professional growth opportunity, and the cost for lodging and food. The undertaking for a one-day event could easily run into hundreds of dollars and three days of time (two days for driving to/from the venue, plus the day-long event). The barrier of distance brings into play the time and money barriers previously mentioned.

Music teachers wonder what kind of incentives might be offered for participating in professional growth opportunities, and incentives were viewed as a point of concern for some respondents. Wondering what is in it for them, music teachers carefully weigh the options presented them for their worthiness. If the music teachers are able to discern some extra value for participation in the way of additional salary, for instance, the participation in the professional growth opportunity would probably be more palatable.

For those teachers looking to achieve professional growth through graduate courses, they generally do not feel that the courses they desire are offered in a convenient venue or offered with the kind of regularity that would be seen as desirable. Because not all music teachers desire to pursue a post baccalaureate degree, they take courses that appeal to their felt needs in the classroom or perhaps to fill what they feel is a void in their undergraduate education. The expectation that all graduate courses should be readily available at all times is ludicrous; however, through advancements in offering asynchronous online courses, institutions of higher learning in the state will perhaps find it easier to deliver more courses more often in a cost effective way.

The ever-present local in-service sessions are occasionally viewed as useless for music teachers due to the general nature of the in-service sessions, meant to appeal to a broader audience. As one reads the following topics regarding professional growth offered at the local level, based on comments made by respondents in free response format, one will notice the general lack of in-service opportunities related to music: all staff in-services/professional growth; behavior management/strategies; classroom management and related topics; general curriculum-related topics; differentiated instruction; workshops and in-service training sessions sponsored by Education Service

Units; language arts; music-related, including music PLCs; school goal-oriented development in services; and technology. The all-purpose school district in-service is not customarily designed to meet the needs of everyone; rather, the purpose is to gather the teachers and provide direction and inspiration, sometimes in a method similar to a school pep rally. The emphasis on specific curricular content does not exclude only music teachers but everyone else not teaching in the discipline being featured. Administrators need to find better ways to rally their teachers in a common in-service session, such as those that are used at the beginning of a new school year. Additional in-service opportunities should be content specific and could be addressed through professional learning communities and the like, in which teachers of like disciplines are grouped for the purpose of staff development.

Conversely, schools and school districts were also found to be supportive of the music teachers' pursuit of professional growth in a variety of ways. The respondents received these good faith gestures as assistance rather than as barriers. Paying for a substitute teacher while away for professional growth was the leading method of assistance. Noting the earlier emphasis on a lack of money as a barrier to professional growth, having the school district pay for the substitute teacher was a prime benefit for teachers who felt themselves financially disadvantaged.

It was recognized by just less than two-thirds of the respondents that they receive discretionary professional growth days or release time, often built into their contracts. This freedom to be absent from normal duties can be seen as a pleasant incentive for music teachers who are willing to pursue professional growth opportunities and yet are bound to their classroom duties. This time of renewal and refreshment away from the

classroom then is devoid of the fear of punishment for skipping a day of work to attend a workshop on music-related instruction since the day was guaranteed to the educator as part of the contractual agreement with the district. Also important to note was that verbal support and encouragement from administrators was viewed positively. When administrators give direction for professional growth, such as suggesting that a teacher attend a conference, class, or workshop, they are providing the encouragement necessary for the teacher to see the time away as a positive, learning, growing experience. Easing the financial burden previously identified, some schools pay for professional growth endeavors outright or through reimbursement. Tuition assistance or remittance for graduate studies is also available through some school districts.

Additional assistance was also seen as a bump up on the pay scale, making growth opportunities financially rewarding in addition to being personally and professionally rewarding. Teachers appreciated it when district activities would occur during duty hours, requiring less time away from home, thereby easing the time burden previously addressed. Occasionally, a school district pays for dues for membership in professional organizations, relieving some of the financial burden from the teacher, as previously mentioned. Travel costs are eased when the teacher receives reimbursement for travel if a school vehicle is unavailable. The fact that a school vehicle is available for travel at no cost to the teacher minimizes the argument about the cost of travel.

Defining Professional Growth Opportunities

As Nebraska music educators make choices regarding their professional growth, they further define what professional growth means to them, realizing that the preferences expressed may not be those opportunities they are currently utilizing. Delving

further, the study asked the respondents to identify professional growth activities that in which they would foresee themselves engaging in the next three years. Many of the same choices seen earlier regarding professional growth opportunities currently being utilized came to the fore when respondents were queried on their professional growth preferences, and yet their predicted participation choices were sometimes at variance with what is currently being utilized or what they prefer.

Attending professional conferences was the most preferred choice for professional growth. In practice, the respondents placed this kind of opportunity in third place, and they predicted that in the next three years it would be their third-most utilized method for professional growth. The preference for professional conferences is could stem from community-building aspects discussed earlier. Large professional conferences such as those offered by professional organizations within the state draw like-minded people together for times of learning, discussion, and networking. Although this choice was the most preferred from the list offered, teachers did not place as high in their list of predicted choices. This lowered placement could be due to a check on the educators' part concerning what is realistically possible given time and budget constraints.

Respondents expressed favorableness toward continuing education as a preferred avenue of professional growth, placing it second on the list of preferred methods of professional growth. The popularity of continuing education as a normally quick, easy method for gaining professional growth explains why it was the most-reported method of professional growth. When predicting their future professional growth choices for the upcoming three-year time period, music educators placed this choice in second place, following their preferences. While workshops, seminars, home study or online courses,

conferences, or hands-on training have their appeal because the time investment is minimal since none are usually of a long-lasting nature.

Graduate studies was embraced by approximately one-third of the respondents as something in which they are taking part, and yet it was preferred by a much smaller number of respondents. It was ranked in fourth place for predicted methods of professional growth in the next three years. As mentioned previously, graduate studies do not appeal to the wider community of music educators probably because of the cost involved, which may not be reimbursed by the local school district thereby causing the teacher to be the financially responsible party for the endeavor. Although almost half of those surveyed held a master's degree, which required graduate studies at some point in their career, the general consensus seems to be that graduate studies are acceptable if a person desires to put forth the time, effort, and financial investment involved in such an undertaking.

Being mentored by another teacher was not greatly practiced, as noted earlier, and the preference for this method of professional growth was similar. Only seven respondents preferred mentoring another teacher, practiced by one-third of the respondents as a means for professional growth. In predicting future professional growth possibilities, participants placed this second-to-last. Veteran teachers most likely feel secure in what they are doing and do not feel the need for mentoring, and they do not wish to be held back by a younger, seemingly less experienced teacher as their mentee. The younger, less experienced teachers felt more of a need for mentoring, identifying it as a fourth-place item on the list of preferred professional growth opportunities. The younger teachers feel the need to be connected with more experienced teachers who have

already learned much through their years of experience. Being mentored during the first five years of teaching aids in teacher retention, and it also promotes furtherance of the profession.

Addressing the idea of a mentor/mentee relationship, respondents to the survey offered a variety of comments in free response format. The comments were categorized in broad groupings that explain the purposes behind entering into a mentor/mentee relationship: for support, encouragement, and idea sharing; to become a better teacher or conductor; to help the mentee learn more about school or district goals, expectations, and procedures; to benefit from the experience of a more experienced teacher; growth for both teachers; to make use of the other party as a sounding board; to build relationships/collaboration; it is required by the school or the district for new teachers to have a mentor; a break from isolation often experienced as a music educator; and the district gives a pay incentive to be a mentor.

One exemplary comment regarding the possibilities of a the mentor/mentee relationship was: “A teacher in a brand new job who is fresh out of college would find this useful. There are quite a few things that are not really taught in a classroom setting, that you just have to go out into the teaching world and learn. That situation is scary and to have an experienced teacher there to help along the way provides that sense of support.”

One other comment about mentoring said, “Being mentored helps you stay on track and allows you to have someone that you can go to quickly when you need advice about a lesson or classroom management. Being a mentor allows you the opportunity to

share what you are doing and help a more inexperienced teacher get settled in and feel comfortable in their work setting.”

The participation in local school district in-service sessions was preferred by few respondents, reinforcing the concept of local in-service education as lacking meaning for music educators. In reality, this method of professional growth placed second, and among the predicted choices for the next three years, it placed first. When respondents were asked to let their feelings be known through a rating of professional growth opportunities offered by the local school district, it was noticed that almost half of the respondents felt that these locally offered professional growth opportunities were somewhat useful to them. One-fifth of the participants felt that local professional growth opportunities were not useful to them, while another one-fifth felt that these opportunities were useful. Smaller percentages felt that the locally offered professional growth opportunities were quite useful or even extremely useful.

Although music teachers generally have little fondness for local district in-service sessions, they do find something that they can glean for their own use. When predicting their choices for the next three years, respondents placed local school district in-services at the top of their list, showing that they realize the fact that whether or not they like the offerings presented at the local level, teachers will be expected to participate in those offerings. Teachers within each district should make their administrators aware of their professional growth needs and desires, and, if given the chance, should assist administrators in planning meaningful local offerings that will have greater appeal and application. Districts can also learn from each other, sharing what has worked well and has been received well by teachers.

While observation was noticeably practiced, especially when it involved observation by administrators, the preference for this kind of professional growth was minimal, as was the prediction that this would be a profession growth opportunity of choice. Teachers and administrators have much to learn from each other, just as teachers have much to learn from each other. Observations are used frequently in music teacher education programs as college and university supervisors visit the preservice educators in their practicum and student teaching environments. The comments, constructive criticisms, and suggestions for improvement given the preservice teachers provide direction for future improvement. Similarly, when their administrators observe music educators, they should view the observation and the follow-up conference as means to improve themselves and their teaching practices, even if the administrator is not well-versed in the methodology and practices of music education. Peer observations allow for teachers to learn from each other, helping to define best practices and a sense of community. Just as peer teaching among younger students promotes student learning, peer observations can also promote learning among teachers.

Journaling, which is thought of as an important element of reflective practice, was not chosen by anyone as a preferred method of professional growth, nor is it in great use currently. Respondents predicted it to be the least likely method for professional growth in the next three years. Revisiting journal-keeping in a different question, survey respondents fulfilled presuppositions based on the results of earlier survey questions regarding journaling. Almost half of the participants felt that journal-keeping was somewhat useful, while approximately one-fourth of the teachers felt that journal-keeping was not useful. Again, in an almost contradictory fashion, some teachers felt that journal-

keeping was useful, while a smaller number of teachers said that journal-keeping was quite useful. The mixed reactions to journaling as a tool for professional growth might suggest that not many teachers understand the purpose and practicality of journaling.

While most teachers assuredly engage in some kind of reflective practice, albeit informal, journaling provides a written record of the teacher's reflective thoughts on a given day about the goings-on in the classroom. This can be an effective tool for future planning, knowing what worked and what did not and why. Additional education should be provided to practicing teachers to assist them in seeing the value of journaling as a tool for reflective practice and professional growth.

When respondents were asked to express interest in a variety of professional growth topics, based on short-term interest, long-term interest, both short-term and long-term, or neither short-term nor long-term, most teachers welcomed all but one of the topics to be presented as both short-term and long-term. *Preparing for another position* was seen as a less-than-likely choice, with less than one-third of the respondents relating that they would see this as neither a long-term nor a short-term opportunity. This response shows that teachers do not customarily think of professional growth as something that will prepare them for another position. Seemingly they are satisfied with their *status quo* and do not desire to pursue other positions requiring additional education.

Participants favored these as either short- or long-term: Update music education knowledge; Pursue an area of professional interest; Improve practical skills, such as teaching, assessing, curriculum planning, administrative tasks, etc.; Improve performance in present position; Prepare for another position; Accomplish personal goals; or Equip yourself to help your local school or school district to reach its goals. All of the listed

choices are positive and growth-oriented in nature. The willingness of teachers to venture into such areas demonstrates that although they might be bound by budgetary and temporal constraints, music teachers desire more information, more learning, and more growth to satisfy their cravings as lifelong learners.

To take additional steps defining professional growth by Nebraska music educators, respondents rated the likelihood of their participation in various professional development activities. The listing was similar in nature to what was noted by Burrack and Bazan (2010). Their top choices were *Elementary General Music Methodology* (Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze, etc.), *Music Technology* (particularly the use of electronic devices and computer software to facilitate playback, recording, composition, storage, and performance), and *Choral Music*. These topics, indicated as being topics in which respondents would be very likely to participate, are illustrative of the need to refresh what was offered during the undergraduate education of the music teachers. More than likely, teachers had courses in elementary general music methods, music technology, and choral music. With rapid technological changes comes the need for constant updating of software, hardware, and instruction in the use of the new equipment. Elementary general music methods has experienced few radical changes over the years, but it could be that teachers feel the need to refresh or revisit things learned during their undergraduate days. Still another reason for the felt need for offerings in general music methods could be that teachers have shifted specialties or grade assignments and now find themselves teaching in an area where there have not taught before. Topics in choral music are often related to reading sessions of new choral music, although teachers are often looking for ways to

deal with issues regarding vocal pedagogy, tone production, performance practice, along with recruitment and advocacy.

Respondents indicated that they were somewhat likely to participate in professional growth opportunities related to *Middle School General Music*, *World/Multicultural Music*, *Music History*, *Music Theory*, *Assessment (Music)*, *Integrating Music with Other Subjects*, *Differentiated Learning*, and *Classroom Management Techniques*. Participants must have felt comfortable to some extent with these topics, or perhaps they were less interested in the topics because they do not teach in these areas or use the pedagogical techniques mentioned. All the same, these are important areas in music education.

Middle school general music is a rare class since most middle school students involved in music are frequently involved in an ensemble rather than participating in a general music class. The content of such a general music class could be an extension of what was learned in elementary school, but it could be developed in greater detail with students who are older. Middle school general music would be a favorable option to keep students involved in music education in the middle school years, especially for those students who are not interested in participating in an ensemble-type class such as orchestra, choir, or band.

World or multicultural music needs to be addressed in Nebraska, where the immigrant population is increasing each year, bringing new students to our schools from places such as the Sudan and Central America, among others. With the continued influx of immigrants from various countries, American music educators can no longer teach the way they did in the past using purely American or Western European repertoire.

Immigrants bring with them their culture and their own unique music. While it might be easier in the music classroom to push aside the cultural musical baggage and act as if it did not exist, the insightful music teacher will find ways to incorporate the musical heritage of new students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds in order to acknowledge this heritage and to help the students assimilate into their new surroundings. Since not all of the students who are immigrants communicate with English as their primary language, techniques and materials should be available to ensure that American and international students whose first language is not English are involved in school music programs.

Music teachers should be expected to demonstrate cultural relevance in today's school music programs. This should also have an impact on how music history is taught. While relatively few schools offer a specific class on music history, ensemble performers should be aware of the historical and cultural background of the repertoire they perform. Teaching music history from an exclusively Western perspective neglects the richness of what other cultures bring to world music history.

Music theory, while not particularly a key concern for music educators, could be taught in a way that employs technology that allows students to explore and manipulate music in such a way that the material is not dry and meaningless for the students taking the class or for the instructor. The use of music writing software and instructional music theory software can assist the instructor and the students in making music theory not only theoretical but relational to music being studied in ensembles or chamber groups. In order to successfully accomplish such an endeavor, music educators will need appropriate education, so that they can, in turn, facilitate learning in their own classrooms.

Assigning grades on attendance and attitude does not constitute assessment.

Teachers needed assistance in learning how to assess their students. Kertz-Welzel (2008) discussed how teaching materials and achievement standards are a starting point for assessing students and giving grades. Specific activities in the teaching material based on the National Standards could also be used to assess students.

Integrating music with other subjects is not done as much as it was in former days. Classroom teachers in the elementary grades used to teach all subjects, and they could easily assist students with making cross-curricular connections. With the widespread use of music specialists, the music-making was relegated to a given class period rather than being part of an integrated whole. Music teachers and regular classroom teachers could use additional guidance integrating music with other subjects.

Differentiated instruction is a topic that is receiving a great deal of attention in various curricular circles. By virtue of its individualized nature, music instruction has its own kind of differentiated instruction. Teachers should be aware of techniques used in other curricular disciplines that have application in music instruction.

Classroom management techniques are learned often through experience. Specialized techniques such as the Boys Town Method or Love and Logic are useful in complementing classroom management. Training sessions are routinely offered to teachers new to a district that employs a certain kind of specialized discipline plan or classroom management technique. Classroom management expectations are sometimes set forth by the local school district's administration and then carried out at the building level. It would be helpful for teachers of all subjects to have similar training in district-

required classroom management techniques in order to maintain some level of consistency throughout the school building.

Study participants did not think highly of several topics and claimed that they were not at all likely to participate in professional development activities. These topics included *Instrumental Music Methods for Strings*, *Instrumental Music Methods for Jazz Band*, *Instrumental Music Methods for Marching Band*, *Instrumental Music Methods for Concert Band*, *Instrumental Music Repair*, and *Instrumental Music Other*. Noting that all of the topics held in low regard were related to instrumental music, one might think that instrumental music teachers have no need for professional growth in these areas because they were adequately prepared in their undergraduate degree program. That assertion is highly doubtful. Instrumental music teachers do not graduate with finely tuned skills in each of the areas mentioned above, ready to serve any school with their extraordinary abilities. Each of the topics mentioned in this section are worthy of attention. Perhaps workshops and conference interest sessions do not address these topics, which would lead respondents to have little to no likelihood of participating in related professional development activities. It would be interesting to delve into this area further in order to establish the reasoning behind the lack of interest in these topics.

Finally, participants in the study were asked to react to a number of belief statements regarding professional growth, rating them according to level of agreement. The respondents said that they agreed with the validity of each of the belief statements presented: *I recognize and appropriately communicate my weaknesses*, *I recognize and appropriately communicate my strengths*, *Professional development improves my skills*, *I recognize and manage my own professional development needs*, *Professional*

development activities are enjoyable, Professional development is a valuable use of my time, Professional development can improve student learning, I actively pursue professional growth activities, and I am satisfied with my current skills as a music educator.

Noticing that more than two-thirds of the respondents felt they are able to recognize and communicate their strengths and weaknesses, it seems reasonable to presume that they would be able to assess their personal needs for professional growth. This was evidenced in the fact that almost two-thirds of respondents stated that they recognize and manage their own professional development needs, and yet just under half of the respondents reported that they actively pursue professional growth activities. The respondents seemed to have a positive attitude toward professional development, feeling that professional development improves their skills and that professional development activities are enjoyable and a valuable use of their time. More than half of the respondents stated that they felt that professional development activities could improve student learning. The connection between professional development activities and their resulting impact student learning is not readily apparent for participants, nor was it something that was measured in this study. The fact that less than half of the respondents were satisfied with their current skills as music educators could mean that they comprehend the need for improvement as well as the need for professional growth.

Years of Experience and Professional Growth

As teachers mature in their field, they are further removed from their days as an undergraduate student. Knowing that good teaching practices must be defined according to current educational thought and changing needs of the student, it might be presumed

that as teachers find themselves further removed from their undergraduate years, they would feel the need to find new connections through professional growth. Continued professional growth is needed in order to reflect the “current and emerging sociological, psychological, and philosophical perspectives” (Campbell, 2007 p. 26).

There was a statistically significant difference noted in that teachers with less experience had a higher tendency to pursue professional growth opportunities; that is, teachers with 1-7 years of experience demonstrated a higher propensity toward the pursuit of professional growth opportunities over their colleagues with 8-15 years of experience and also over those with more than 15 years of experience. As teachers mature in their profession, it could be that they feel that they have earned their professional growth through the school of experience over other formal or informal professional growth opportunities.

The researcher did not expect these findings. In presupposing that younger teachers would be caught up in establishing themselves in their profession, it was surprising to note that the younger teachers are the very ones seeking professional growth opportunities in higher numbers than their veteran counterparts. Campbell (2007), as well as Field and Latta (2001), felt that teachers who have been in the profession longer would be the teachers seeking ways in which to stay current through professional growth opportunities. However, as was noted in the results of this study, the longer the teachers were in the field, the less likely they were to participate in professional growth opportunities. Perhaps the veteran teachers feel that they are receiving their professional growth via other avenues that were not reported on this study.

Teacher Certification, Teaching Assignment, and Grade Level Assignment

When examining the areas of teacher certification, teaching assignment, and grade level assignment, it was thought that there would be some kind of effect on professional growth opportunities from one or all of these variables. However, the study negated this presupposition as results indicated that there is no difference in the likelihood of participating in a professional growth opportunity by area of teacher certification, by teaching area, or by grades taught. This information, then, puts all music teachers basically on the same level of predisposition toward professional growth pursuits with respect to these factors.

The researcher was curious whether there would be an impact on professional growth choices through teacher certification, teaching assignment, and grade level assignment. The literature did not speak directly to the impact of any of these three factors on professional growth choices, which aroused the researcher's curiosity. While many Nebraska music educators are certified with a field endorsement that allows them to teach music classes (general, vocal, or instrumental) at any grade level (K-12), there are numerous music teachers in Nebraska who are certified as only general music specialists, vocal music specialists, instrumental music specialists, or some combination thereof. The researcher's assumption was that more of the general music specialists would be seeking professional growth opportunities; however, the study negated this idea.

Music teaching assignments in Nebraska have numerous appearances, since not all music teachers stay within a specialty area. Respondents identified various teaching assignments, including general music only, vocal music only, instrumental music only, a

combination of general and vocal music, a combination of general and instrumental music, a combination of vocal and instrumental music, and a combination of general, vocal, and instrumental music. Because of this mixture of the teaching assignments, the assumed impact of teaching assignment on professional growth pursuit was invalid.

The hypothesis that grade level assignment had an influence on professional growth choices was also quashed in much the same way as music teaching assignments. Grade level assignments reported in this study included Grades K-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12, Grades K-8, Grades K-5 and 9-12, Grades 6-12, and Grades K-12. Again because of the diverse combinations of grade levels, the impact of grade level assignment on professional growth choices was nullified.

Age, Gender, Highest Degree Held, and NSAA District

Similar in nature to the earlier question regarding the impact of years of experience on professional growth choices, it was interesting to note that the age of the teacher does have an effect on professional growth choices. Specifically, the results suggest that when teachers reach more advanced years, they do not choose to participate in as many professional growth opportunities as they did in their younger years.

As mentioned previously, Thompson (2007) posited that gender could add to the formation of beliefs about teaching and learning. By using gender as an independent variable in this study, it may be determined if men and women vary in their preferences toward professional growth. The results of this study suggest that gender does not have an effect on professional growth choices among music teachers in Nebraska. Although two-thirds of the respondents were female and one-third were male, the influence of gender on professional growth choices was unfounded. Perhaps this is due to a neutral

gender bias in agencies and institutions providing professional growth opportunities.

Supposing that additional education that yields a higher degree would promote additional professional growth work, it was thought that a teacher with a master's degree or a doctoral degree would engage in more professional growth endeavors than someone with a bachelor's degree. An earlier reference to Borman and Rachuba (1999) discussed the topic of the kind and number of degrees held by a teacher in a study that explored the distribution of teacher qualifications and professional growth opportunities. Perhaps the inclination toward seeking professional growth opportunities is related to the kind and number of degrees held by a teacher; however, in this study there was not a significant effect of highest degree held on professional growth opportunities. This lack of impact of a higher degree could conceivably exist because those teachers who have already attained a higher degree feel that they have done their professional growth and need do no more, so they find other ways to maintain their professional growth record. As illustrated in comments from participants in this study, once a teacher had obtained their master's degree, they felt as if there would not be a constructive purpose to continue taking graduate classes, which is a kind of professional growth endeavor. It might be, then, that other kinds of professional growth are looked upon with a similar attitude, resulting in those with higher degrees participating in professional growth opportunities the same as or less than those with a bachelor's degree.

Location and distance from professional growth locations can be a determining factor for teachers seeking professional growth opportunities. This study sought to determine whether the location of the teacher, as determined by the teacher's location in a district of the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA), would have an effect on

the teacher's professional growth choices. The NSAA divides the state of Nebraska into six geographic districts, roughly consisting of the southeastern corner of the state (District I), the eastern part of the state (District II), the northeastern corner of the state (District III), the north central part of the state (District IV), the southwestern corner of the state (District V), and the northwestern corner of the state (District VI). Teachers from the western two-thirds of the state find themselves traveling to the Lincoln and Omaha areas to attend major professional conference. The result of this study indicated there was not a significant effect of NSAA district location on choices of professional growth opportunities. Although travel expenses have increased in recent years due to higher fuel prices, teachers are often willing to travel to some degree in order to attend a professional growth event. While in the past it might not have been the case, teachers are very much like the general public when it comes to taking advantage of what might be termed "easy transportation." Driving from one end of the state to another for a conference is commonplace, while in the past it might have been the case due to unreliable vehicles and less-than-ideal roads.

Miscellaneous Comments from Respondents

Thirty-eight (38) statements from respondents regarding their thoughts on professional growth were recorded from the final survey item, which was in free response format. Comments that were made in the final survey item were both positive and negative in nature, as can be seen when examining the comments in Appendix H.

The lack of music-specific professional growth opportunities at the local level was addressed in numerous commentaries. Teachers in smaller schools and remote areas of the state are not the only the only ones bemoaning the general nature of local

professional growth offerings, as was evidenced by comments that came from teachers in larger districts in the eastern part of the state. Several respondents made comments that discussed the centrality of professional growth (development) in the respondent's professional life, citing the teacher's determination as the main factor for continued professional growth.

Specific kinds of professional growth opportunities that were requested included thorough education for band directors, training in Orff Schulwerk and the Kodály method, and education in current technology for use in the music classroom. A few comments could be construed as pleas for local officials to put forth some kind of offering having to do with music instruction for a local level professional growth opportunity.

Constraints of time and money were mentioned in a mixture of responses, although these barriers appeared to be invalidated through certain pointed comments in which respondents stated unequivocally that teachers who want professional growth should take advantage of opportunities without excuses. The length of duration for professional growth opportunities was addressed in a few comments, stressing the value of long-term opportunities over short-term opportunities.

Overall, it was beneficial to learn how these 38 comments reflect the general thoughts of Nebraska music educators regarding professional growth. The comments show that thought is being given to the definition of professional growth, but, even more than that, also to the significance of professional growth for the vitality of the music educator's professional life.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Professional Growth

The researcher's experience as a music educator with 12 years of teaching experience in Nebraska provided impetus for this study. With past teaching experiences in Texas, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, the researcher noticed a certain uniqueness to the culture of Nebraska music education not replicated in these other states. Conservative, traditional approaches are familiar and tend to be mainstays in professional growth for Nebraska's music educators.

While it was assumed by the researcher that an Internet-based survey would be easily accessible by all participants of the study, it was an unfair assumption that perhaps excluded some from adequately participating in the study. Because a paper-based option was not made available to study participants, it could be speculated that the number of participants could essentially have been higher had a paper-based option been made available to those participants not able to complete an online survey for any reason, including the inability to navigate to the survey site from the invitational email. Although some music educators, including the researcher, operate in a reasonably paperless fashion, relying primarily on electronic technology as their media of choice, it should be remembered that not all music educators function in this way.

Even though music educators may rely on paper-based media for a variety of functions in their personal and professional lives, many have accepted the idea of distance education as a mode of delivering instruction to outlying locations. Distance education as a method of delivery for course instruction has been in use by colleges and universities in the state for a number of years at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Noting the sparse population of Nebraska, especially in the western third of the

state, it seems that online delivery of various professional growth opportunities could be a means to reach out to music educators who see distance as an insurmountable barrier to attendance at a live event. It is time to explore the possibilities of asynchronous or synchronous delivery via the Internet of not only undergraduate and graduate classes, but also of conference and in-service sessions, honor ensemble rehearsals, and so forth, in order that those teachers not in the immediate vicinity of the venue might still take advantage of the opportunity to learn from the event.

Honor ensembles such as the NMEA All-State Ensembles in chorus, jazz band, orchestra, and concert band, along with the NCDA Sing Around Nebraska and Singing Youth of Nebraska Honor Choirs have potential to double as growth opportunities for music educators in Nebraska, in addition to serving students participating in these ensembles. When music educators are able to observe a conductor work rehearse an ensemble in such a setting, ideas can be gleaned for adapted use in the music educator's home classroom. This kind of learning by observing might not fit a traditional view of professional growth, but it is a means by which music educators can learn from successful models, in much the same way that one teacher learns from another by observing in another's classroom.

Educational opportunities offered without academic credit attached to the endeavor could encourage certain teachers to take academic courses for their own enrichment rather than to fulfill any kind of degree requirements. Fees assessed by colleges and universities would cover the services of the presenter and any in-house expenses incurred with such a presentation. In addition to live delivery, these opportunities could be streamed live via the Internet to other participants who have

enrolled in such a course but are unable to be physically present at the venue. , The event could be video recorded for asynchronous Internet delivery or archived on DVD media for future use by participants unable to meet during the scheduled time frame of the event. Such educational opportunities could be viewed as a community outreach tool by the college or university hosting the event, as a service to the community of professionals in order to continue the building of excellence in music education in Nebraska.

The use of technology does not need to be relegated solely to distance education. Technology has a place in the classroom. Unfortunately, teachers do not always know how to operate mp3 players, laptops, computer projectors, SMART™ Boards, and other common classroom technological devices because they have not previously encountered the devices and are uninformed how these devices can be appropriately used in the classroom setting. This could be why so many respondents to the survey stated that they would like to see professional growth opportunities offered that deal with technology in the music classroom. Copeland (2011) observed the following, and, although pointed at choral directors, application can be made to music educators in general.

A large percentage of choral directors missed out on the digital revolution and are resistant to change. Others find it difficult to keep up with the fast pace of technological development. Many own an iPhone but don't know what to do with it. Some choose to plead ignorance, thinking that their students and the rest of the world will accommodate their inability to function with technology. It is a poor choice; resistance to change brings an ignorance of how the world works today.

This ignorance usually results in irrelevancy, a condition that renders teachers ineffective in their communication with others and impairs the ability to effect positive change in the lives of students (p. 28).

Online networking tools, especially Personal Learning Networks (PLNs), have the ability to connect music educators from various regions, without regard for political boundaries. Professional learning is enhanced by others in the field via blogs, twitter, wikis, podcasts, and other social media, for the seek of professional networking, thereby linking experts and novices. Teachers who are willing to explore these ways of staying connected within the profession will find rewards in the ways that these media enhance communication and break down barriers of distance and isolation, often experienced by music educators. Not all music teachers will be brave enough to explore these technological avenues of professional growth, networking, and instruction without the assistance of a more knowledgeable other. Identifying those who are more knowledgeable and willing to mentor those who are willing to learn could be a task for professional organizations within the state as a service to others in the profession.

Recommendations for Further Research

There is no doubt that challenging issues continue to challenge the kinds of professional development music educators need, including the constant change in technology, availability of funding, shifting student demographics, viability of music education in the public's perspective, and the feeling among some that professional development should be optional. Professional organizations for music educators remain dedicated to assisting their members with professional growth endeavors, providing relevant conferences and workshops for their constituency. Colleges and universities are

finding new ways to meet the development of preservice music educators through new course offerings that are prototypical and yet malleable, shaping future educators for lifelong learning.

While this study sought to survey the population of Nebraska music teachers, only 456 teachers completed the study, which left untapped the input of 688 music teachers. It would be advantageous to have a greater scope of participation, which might be accomplished through the assistance of the Nebraska Music Educators Association (NMEA) the Nebraska Choral Directors (NCDA), and the Nebraska State Bandmasters Association (NSBA). As the largest professional organization of music educators in the state, the assistance of NMEA would be valuable in reaching a wider range of music educators. This is not to minimize the contributions of the members of NCDA and NSBA; however, there is appreciable overlapping in membership between NMEA and the other organizations.

Because music teachers who are predisposed to participating in professional growth might have a greater propensity to participate in studies such as this one, it would be appropriate to investigate how to gain insight on professional growth practices from those outside this realm of active professional growth participants. Research conducted at the local school district level, or even at the building level, might be more productive in gathering information from those teachers who do not actively seek professional growth opportunities. It would be helpful to know what it is preventing these teachers from active participation in professional growth, with the idea that productive ideas could be brought forward to enhance current professional development offerings.

The measurement tool used in this study was difficult for some participants to navigate, which more than likely contributed to the mortality of the surveys that were begun and not completed. A more succinct instrument could be designed to measure specific points regarding professional growth among Nebraska's music educators. Having the option to complete the survey on paper rather than online might also produce a higher yield of participants, especially for those music educators who are not comfortable completing on online survey tool.

The Housewright Declaration, a summation of the points of consensus made at the Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education, held in Tallahassee, Florida, September 23-26, 1999, reinforced the need for music education in classrooms in the United States. The ensuing document contained the visions of outstanding music educators and appeared in 2000 as *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the Future of Education*, published by MENC: The National Association for Music Education. The document showed the need for continued growth in the profession by individual educators. Professional growth for music educators is needed now more than ever because the ways in which music education is delivered are changing, as is the population to which it is being delivered. Music educators and their students will reap the rewards when meaningful music instruction and experience are developed; when other music that people experience is integrated it into classroom music instruction; when teachers are prepared to use all appropriate technological tools in advancing music study while recognizing the importance of people coming together to make and share music; when music activities beyond the school setting are coordinated to insure formal and informal curricular integration; when meaningful music instruction is provided for all

people beginning at the earliest possible age and continuing throughout life. Lifelong learning is the key to teaching, learning, and growing as a music educator.

Future research is needed on the effectiveness of journaling and its place in the professional growth of music educators. Longitudinal research in the area of mentoring teachers new to the field of music would be welcome in order to determine the effect of mentoring on teacher retention in Nebraska. There would be additional merit in supplementing the quantitative data of this study with follow-up qualitative interviews in order to attain a deeper, richer perspective from the teachers on their professional growth perspectives. Furthermore, it would be helpful to know how much of a personal investment teachers are making toward their own professional growth, especially in a financial sense, as well as recognizing the substantial investment of time.

While a majority of Nebraska music educators support the idea of professional growth, boosting the perceived value of professional growth is necessary. More funding for specialized music in-service sessions at the local district level is necessary. Research organizations interested in the impact of such specialized in-service training might be able to assist local school districts in funding such events in order to examine the impact of these specialized training sessions on student learning and teacher development. Teachers in the twenty-first century have diverse needs regarding professional growth. Future research could assist administrators, professional organizations, and colleges and universities plan and provide meaningful, practical professional development opportunities for Nebraska's music educators.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music

Overall - Opinions/Preferences

1. Within the last three years, in what kind of professional growth experiences have you participated? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Continuing education (This can be in the form of workshops, seminars, home-study or online courses, conferences, or hands-on training.)
- ☐ Participating in local school district in-services
- ☐ Journal-keeping
- ☐ Attending professional conferences
- ☐ Mentoring another teacher
- ☐ Being mentored by another teacher
- ☐ Being observed by an administrator or by another teacher/colleague
- ☐ Graduate studies
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2. What is your preferred choice for a professional growth experience? Please select your top choice.

- ☐ Continuing education (This can be in the form of workshops, seminars, home-study or online courses, conferences, or hands-on training.)
- ☐ Participating in local school district in-services.
- ☐ Journal-keeping
- ☐ Attending professional conferences
- ☐ Mentoring another teacher
- ☐ Being mentored by another teacher
- ☐ Being observed by an administrator or another teacher/colleague
- ☐ Graduate studies

Other (please specify)

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music

3. To what extent is each of the following factors a barrier to your participation in continuing education experiences?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
Locations for professional growth opportunities are too distant from where I live/work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family obligations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of support by local school district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discouragement by other staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of support from administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of available courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of incentives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Professional growth opportunities can be short term, such as a one-day seminar, conference topic, or discussion. They can also be long-term, such as an ongoing discussion group or focused work. For each purpose for professional development listed below, indicate your preference for participation.

	Short Term	Long Term	Both Short Term and Long Term	Neither Short Term Term Nor Long Term
Update music education knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pursue an area of professional interest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve practical skills, such as teaching, assessing, curriculum planning, administrative tasks, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve performance in present position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prepare for another position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accomplish personal goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equip yourself to help your local school or school district to reach its goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music

5. Indicate the likelihood that you will participate in the following kinds of professional growth opportunities in the next three years.

	Not at all likely	Not very likely	Neutral	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Continuing education (This can be in the form of workshops, seminars, home-study or online courses, conferences, or hands-on training.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school district in-services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journal-keeping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduate studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

School or District Offerings and Support

6. Does your school or district provide professional development opportunities specific to MUSIC teaching and learning?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. Please indicate what types of professional development opportunities your school district supports/offers.

8. How would you rate the professional development opportunities offered by your local school district?

☐ Not useful

☐ Somewhat useful

☐ Useful

☐ Quite useful

☐ Extremely useful

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music

9. How does your school district support your choices for professional development? (Choose all that apply.)

- ☐ The school pays for the professional growth endeavor or reimburses me
- ☐ Verbal support and encouragement
- ☐ Discretionary professional growth days (release time)
- ☐ Paying for a substitute teacher while away for professional growth
- ☐ Tuition for graduate studies
- ☐ Not at all

Other (please specify)

College Courses

10. Have you taken additional college credits beyond the bachelor's degree?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

College Courses

11. Since you have taken additional college credits beyond the bachelor's degree, for what purpose were these hours taken? (Choose all that apply.)

- ☐ Advanced degree (master's or doctoral degree)
- ☐ Tenure requirements for school district
- ☐ To satisfy personal desire
- ☐ To keep current on educational practices
- ☐ For salary advancement
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Observation

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music

12. How many times per school year does an administrator formally observe you in a classroom situation, resulting in some kind of evaluation of your teaching?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 3-4
- ☐ 5 or more

Observation

13. After your formal observation by an administrator, how many times are you provided with oral or written feedback?

- ☐ Every time
- ☐ Almost every time
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

14. How many times per school year are you able to observe another teacher in a classroom situation?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 3-4
- ☐ More than 4

Observation

15. What have you learned from observing another teacher?

Alternative Approaches: Journaling and Mentoring

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music

16. Journaling can provide the opportunity for a teacher to record reflective thoughts on lessons conducted during a day, chronicle student behavior, jot down useful resources, and record examples of students' work. How useful would it be for you to journal your teaching activities?

- ☐ Not useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Quite useful
- ☐ Extremely useful

17. Have you mentored a less experienced teacher?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

18. Have you been mentored by a more experienced teacher?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

19. For what purpose(s) would a teacher want to be in a mentor/mentee partnership?

Overall — Opinions/Preferences

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music

20. Rate how likely it would be that you would participate in professional development activities with these topics.

	Not at all likely	Not very likely	Neutral	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Elementary General Music Methodology (Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Middle School General Music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instrumental Music Methods for Strings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instrumental Music Methods for Jazz Band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instrumental Music Methods for Marching Band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instrumental Music Methods for Concert Band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instrumental Music Repair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instrumental Music Other (specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music Technology (particularly the use of electronic devices and computer software to facilitate playback, recording, composition, storage, and performance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choral Music (all levels)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
World/Multicultural Music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music History	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music Theory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment (Music)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integrating Music with other subjects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differentiated Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom Management Techniques	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall — Opinions/Preferences

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music

21. For each statement check the most appropriate response to your general beliefs concerning professional development.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Professional development activities are enjoyable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development improves my skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development is a valuable use of my time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my current skills as a music educator.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I recognize and appropriately communicate my strengths.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I recognize and appropriately communicate my weaknesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development can improve student learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I recognize and manage my own professional development needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I actively pursue professional growth activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographic Information

22. What is your area of teaching endorsement?

- ☐ K-12 Field Endorsement
- ☐ K-6 Vocal/General Music
- ☐ K-12 Vocal
- ☐ K-12 Instrumental

23. What grade levels do you teach? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Kindergarten-Grade 5
- ☐ Grades 6-8
- ☐ Grades 9-12

Other (please specify)

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music**24. What types of music classes do you teach? (Check all that apply.)**

- ☐ General music
- ☐ Vocal music
- ☐ Instrumental music

Other (please specify)

25. What is the highest degree that you hold?

- ☐ I do not hold a college degree.
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctorate

26. How many total years of teaching experience do you have?

- ☐ 1-7 years
- ☐ 8-15 years
- ☐ More than 15 years

27. In which NSAA District are you currently teaching?

- ☐ District I
- ☐ District II
- ☐ District III
- ☐ District IV
- ☐ District V
- ☐ District VI

28. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Music**29. What is your age?**

- ☐ 20-29 years
- ☐ 30-39 years
- ☐ 40-49 years
- ☐ 50-59 years
- ☐ 60 years and older

Thank you!

30. Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Your assistance in completing this survey is greatly appreciated. If there is additional information you would like to share with the researcher regarding this survey, please do so in the space provided below.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY REFINEMENT DOCUMENT

To: [email address]
 From: Phillip Hesterman
 Re: Survey refinement

Dear _____:

I am writing to ask your help in completing a research project being conducted with faculty in the department of Music Education at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. This research study will seek to discern what kinds of professional growth experiences Nebraska's music teachers employ. Furthermore, an attempt will be made to clarify the factors that influence the decision by the music educator whether or not to participate in professional growth experiences.

What professional growth experiences—such as journal-keeping, conference attendance, mentoring, observation, continuing education, in-services, and graduate study—keep music teachers in Nebraska engaged and learning throughout their professional lives? What do Nebraska music teachers perceive to be barriers to their professional growth? How do Nebraska music teachers define their perception of a worthwhile professional growth opportunity? Are the reported professional growth choices of music teachers related to the years of experience of the music teacher? Does the area of teaching assignment (general, choral, instrumental) have an effect on the kind of professional growth opportunities utilized by music teachers? Does age, gender, or degree held impact Nebraska music teachers' perceptions about professional development? The linked test instrument is being designed to answer these questions.

Would you take a few minutes of your time and assist me in refining the test instrument? Complete the questionnaire as if you were participating in the study. Your answers are inconsequential at this point; however, your suggestions for improving the test instrument are important. Please click on the link below to access the survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HY9SZP8>

Feel free to share comments via email or on the attached Instrument Assessment form concerning any aspects that you perceive as being unclear or important. Are there questions that are of little value or have confusing or misleading language? Is the format clear and easy to follow? Do you have suggestions that may improve the rate of return when the study is conducted?

Please reply to this request by January 5, 2011. Your assistance and participation are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
 Phillip Hesterman
 Ph.D. Candidate
 School of Music
 University of Nebraska—Lincoln

APPENDIX C
INSTRUMENT ASSESSMENT FORM

**Professional Growth Survey
Hesterman**

Directions: Mark an X to indicate your response on the following rating scale:

1. Are the survey directions clear?

1	2	3	4	5
Unclear		Moderately Clear		Very Clear

2. Are the survey items related to understanding professional growth opportunities utilized by Nebraska music educators?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Related		Moderately Related		Closely Related

3. Are the survey items appropriate with regard to size, type, and format?

1	2	3	4	5
Inappropriate		Moderately Appropriate		Very Appropriate

4. Please share any other comments you have about the questionnaire.

APPENDIX D

INTRODUCTORY EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

To: [e-mail address]

Fr: Phillip Hesterman

Re: Dissertation Research: Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities

Dear Fellow Music Educator:

I am examining the professional growth opportunities utilized by Nebraska music educators. This research is part of my dissertation for the Ph.D. in music education at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. Dr. Robert Woody is my advisor. I would like to invite you to complete a brief survey to assist me.

Participating in this study will require completing an online survey that will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. This email is being sent to music educators in Nebraska. Your participation will lead to a greater understanding of how music educators in Nebraska view professional growth, thus providing a platform for discussion on how professional growth opportunities might be improved in the institutions of higher learning in Nebraska and by professional organizations functioning within our state. You will find the link to the survey below.

There are no known risks involved in participating in this survey, Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Nebraska Music Educators. (IRB # 20101211468 EX). Your responses will be recorded completely anonymously. When the data is reported in the dissertation, at professional meetings, or in professional journals, it will be reported only as aggregated data. You are free to decide not to participate in this study without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator, the University of Nebraska, or your institution. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

In brief, your decision to complete and submit the survey indicates your voluntary decision to participate in the study. You may call the investigator at any time, (308) 379-5481. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research project participant that may have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the project, you may contact the University of Nebraska—Lincoln Institutional Review Board, (402) 472-6965.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this research project. I look forward to receiving your completed survey. Please click on the link below to access the survey. This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message. [SurveyLink]

If you do not wish to receive further emails from me, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from my mailing list. [\[RemoveLink\]](#)

Phillip K. Hesterman
Ph.D. Candidate
School of Music
University of Nebraska—Lincoln

Dr. Robert H. Woody
University of Nebraska
354 Westbrook Music Building
Lincoln, NE 68588-0100
Phone: (402) 472-6231
FAX: (402) 472-8962

APPENDIX E

FOLLOW-UP EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

To: [e-mail address]

Fr: Phillip Hesterman

Re: Understanding Professional Growth Survey follow-up

Dear Fellow Music Educator:

Last week I sent an email link to a survey regarding the professional growth opportunities utilized by music teachers in Nebraska. If you have already taken the survey, please disregard this message. If you have not had the opportunity to complete the survey, would you please do so today? I would appreciate your help in this endeavor. The link to the survey is provided below.

Each response to this survey is important. Most teachers complete the survey in around 10 minutes. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact me. I would be happy to talk with you. My phone number is (308) 379-5481, and my email address is pkhesterman@huskers.unl.edu. Thank you for your help in completing this research.

Dear Fellow Music Educator:

I am examining the professional growth opportunities utilized by Nebraska music educators. This research is part of my dissertation for the Ph.D. in music education at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. Dr. Robert Woody is my advisor. I would like to invite you to complete a brief survey to assist me.

Participating in this study will require completing an online survey that will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. This email is being sent to music educators in Nebraska. Your participation will lead to a greater understanding of how music educators in Nebraska view professional growth, thus providing a platform for discussion on how professional growth opportunities might be improved in the institutions of higher learning in Nebraska and by professional organizations functioning within our state. You will find the link to the survey below.

There are no known risks involved in participating in this survey, Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Nebraska Music Educators. (IRB # 20101211468 EX). Your responses will be recorded completely anonymously. When the data is reported in the dissertation, at professional meetings, or in professional journals, it will be reported only as aggregated data. You are free to decide not to participate in this study without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator, the University of

Nebraska, or your institution. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

In brief, your decision to complete and submit the survey indicates your voluntary decision to participate in the study. You may call the investigator at any time, (308) 379-5481. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research project participant that may have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the project, you may contact the University of Nebraska—Lincoln Institutional Review Board, (402) 472-6965.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this research project. I look forward to receiving your completed survey. Please click on the link below to access the survey. This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message. [SurveyLink]

If you do not wish to receive further emails from me, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from my mailing list. [RemoveLink]

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FAX: (402) 472-8962

APPENDIX F

FINAL CONTACT EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

To: [e-mail address]

Fr: Phillip Hesterman

Re: Understanding Professional Growth Survey follow-up 2

Dear Fellow Music Educator:

Two weeks ago, I emailed an invitation to you to participate in a research study that examines the professional development opportunities utilized by music educators in Nebraska. I am writing to you because I have not yet received your completed online survey.

Because the link to the survey was sent to only randomly selected music teachers in Nebraska, your participation is important in this study, which seeks a greater understanding of music educators in Nebraska view professional growth opportunities, thus providing a platform for discussion on how professional growth opportunities might be improved in the institutions of higher learning in Nebraska and within the various professional organizations that function within our state.

Would you please complete it today? It will require approximately 10 minutes of your time. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated. The link to the survey is provided below.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be happy to talk with you. My phone number is (308) 379-5481, and my email address is pkhesterman@huskers.unl.edu. Thank you for helping me with this important study.

Dear Fellow Music Educator:

I am examining the professional growth opportunities utilized by Nebraska music educators. This research is part of my dissertation for the Ph.D. in music education at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. Dr. Robert Woody is my advisor. I would like to invite you to complete a brief survey to assist me.

Participating in this study will require completing an online survey that will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. This email is being sent to music educators in Nebraska. Your participation will lead to a greater understanding of how music educators in Nebraska view professional growth, thus providing a platform for discussion on how professional growth opportunities might be improved in the institutions of higher learning in Nebraska and by professional organizations functioning within our state. You will find the link to the survey below.

There are no known risks involved in participating in this survey, Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Nebraska Music Educators. (IRB # 20101211468 EX). Your responses will be recorded completely anonymously. When the data is reported in the dissertation, at professional meetings, or in professional journals, it will be reported only as aggregated data. You are free to decide not to participate in this study without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator, the University of Nebraska, or your institution. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

In brief, your decision to complete and submit the survey indicates your voluntary decision to participate in the study. You may call the investigator at any time, (308) 379-5481. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research project participant that may have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the project, you may contact the University of Nebraska—Lincoln Institutional Review Board, (402) 472-6965.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this research project. I look forward to receiving your completed survey. Please click on the link below to access the survey. This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message. [SurveyLink]

If you do not wish to receive further emails from me, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from my mailing list. [RemoveLink]

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APPENDIX G

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL



University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (IRB) 312 N. 14th St., 209 Alex West Lincoln, NE 68588-0408 (402) 472-6965 Fax (402) 472-6048 irb@unl.edu	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY IRB #: IRB Decision Date: Date Received: Code #: NUgrant Project ID: 11468
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1. General Project Information

1. Project Title: Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Nebraska Music Educators

Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Nebraska Music Educators

2. Principal Investigator and 3. Secondary Investigator:

Principal Investigator:	Phillip Hesterman philhest@kdsi.net	Secondary Investigator:	Robert Woody rwoody2@unl.edu (402)472-6231
Department:	School of Music	Department:	School of Music

4. Type of Project:

Research

5. Does the research involve an outside institution/agency other than UNL?

No

6. Where will participation take place (e.g., UNL, at home, in a community building, schools, hospitals, clinics, prisons, unions, etc)? Please specify and give location if not already listed above.

Internet survey

7. Briefly describe the facilities available for the research (e.g., there will be a quiet room in the school to conduct interviews, a secure lab space is available, etc).

The participants will take the survey wherever there are able to access the Internet.



8. Present / Proposed Funding Source:

NA

9. Study Start Date

01/03/2011

10. Study End Date

02/04/2011

11. Is this a multi-institutional study?

No

2. Project Information Continued

1. Does the research involve Prisoners?

No

2. Will the research only be conducted in schools or educational settings?

No

3. Does the research involve only the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior?

Yes

3.a. Does the research involve children (under 19 years of age)?

No

4. Does the research involve only the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens?

No

5. Does the research involve only studying, evaluating or examining public benefit or service programs?

No

6. Does the research involve only a taste and food quality evaluation or food consumer acceptance study?

No

7. Does the research present more than minimal risk to human subjects?

No

- ☐ Clinical studies of drugs and/or medical devices.
- ☐ Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture.
- ☐ Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means.
- ☐ Collection of data through noninvasive procedures routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves.
- ☐ Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for non-research purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis).

-
- ☐ Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
 - ☐ Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior).
 - ☒ Research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

7.a. Does the research involve only procedures included in the previous 8 categories?

Yes

7.b. Could identification of subjects put them at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be socially or economically damaging?

No

3. Description of Participants:

1. In the table below, please the estimated number of participants per category:

	Male	Female	Unspecified	Total
Adults	50	50	0	100
Children	0	0	0	0
Totals	50	50	0	100

2. Please indicate which special groups will be utilized/recruited for your study. Check all that apply.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults, Non Students | <input type="checkbox"/> UNL Students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children (under age 19) | <input type="checkbox"/> Decisionally Impaired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutionalized Persons | <input type="checkbox"/> Students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Fetuses/Neonates | <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Neurological Impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Limited Civil Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Language Impaired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with HIV/AIDS | <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Psychological Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Mental Retardation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adults w/ Legal Representatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Handicapped |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

3. Will participants of both sexes/genders be recruited?

Yes

4. Will participation be limited to certain racial or ethnic groups?

No

5. Describe the participant population to be included in this research and how they are selected, including any special characteristics targeted for inclusion.

Participant population will include music educators in the state of Nebraska. Participants will be identified via the Nebraska Dept. of Education directory of schools and the directory for the Nebraska Music Educators Association. A stratified purposeful sample of music teachers will be selected from a directory of schools published by the Nebraska Music Educators Association.

6. Describe your access to the population that will allow recruitment of the necessary number of participants.

As a member of the Nebraska Music Educators Association, the researcher has access to the organization's member directory, which is the key to accessing the email addresses of the intended population.

7. The research plan should have adequate provisions to protect the privacy interests of participants. Explain provisions to protect privacy interests of participants. This refers to how investigators will access private information from or about participants during and after their involvement in the research (e.g., time, place, etc of research procedures)

Research will be conducted via an online survey created on SurveyMonkey. Participants will receive an email giving them access to the survey via a link provided in the email. Records will be kept through the completion of the study on the SurveyMonkey server. The primary investigator will be the only one to access the information. IP addresses will not be collected.

8. Describe your process to ensure that all persons assisting with the research are adequately informed about the protocol and their research-related duties and functions.

Primary investigator will share and review printed protocol with secondary investigator.

9. If not already described above, will any groups or categories of participants be excluded from this research?

No

10. Will some or all subjects likely be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence?

No

4. Unique Research Methodology or Data Sources

1. Will your project involve audio taping?

No

2. Is this project web-based research?

Yes

2.a. For web-based studies, how will the data be handled? Will the data be sent to a secure server? Will the data be encrypted while in transit? Will you be collecting IP addresses?

Survey data will be stored on the SurveyMonkey server, where it will be accessed only by the researcher. Encrypted data will be downloaded for analysis and stored on the researcher's Mobile Me iDisk. IP addresses will not be collected.

3. Is this study utilizing Protected Health Information (PHI; e.g., information obtained from a hospital, clinic, or treatment facility)?

No

4. Does this project involve genetic data, sampling, or analysis?

No

5. Does this project ask questions about illegal drug use or criminal activity that places the participant at risk for legal action?

No

6. Does this project involve photography?

No

7. Does this project involve videotaping?

No

8. Does this project involve archival or secondary data analysis?

No

9. Does this project involve biological samples?

No



10. Does this project ask participants to perform physical tasks?

No

5. Purpose, Methods, & Procedures

Describe the research purpose of the project

1. What is the significance/purpose of the study? (Please provide a brief 1-2 paragraph explanation in lay terms, to include a brief literature justification.)

This study will be designed to understand how K-12 music teachers in Nebraska's schools utilize various avenues of professional growth. While studies have been done with music educators in other states, the researcher feels the need to evaluate how music educators in Nebraska are taking advantage of professional growth opportunities. Upon receiving the results of this study, the information gleaned would be helpful to the various professional music educator organizations that operate within the state of Nebraska, so that they might plan for additional or better professional growth opportunities for music educators in the state.

Description of the Methods and Procedures

2. Describe the data collection procedures and what participants will have to do.

Participants will complete an online survey. Collected data will be stored on the website.

3. How long will these procedures take the participants to complete? Please describe the duration of the session, the number of sessions, over what period of time, etc.

Participants will need 10-15 minutes to complete the online survey. One session is all that will be required.

4. Will there be any follow-up or will reminders be sent?

Yes

4.a. Please explain:

Two follow-up emails will be sent. Each will contain an encouraging reminder to those who have not yet completed the online survey.

5. Differentiate any procedure being done solely for research purposes from procedures being done anyway.

NA

6. Describe the time you have available to conduct and complete the research (ex. the time from initiation of the research to completion of data analysis).

The time from the initiation of the survey to completion of data analysis. The researcher would like to initiate the survey on January 3, 2011.

6. Description of Recruiting Procedures

1. How will the names and contact information for participants be obtained?

Names and contact information will be obtained from the Nebraska Department of Education's online directory and from the published directory of the Nebraska Music Educators Association.

2. How will participants be approached about participating in the study?

An email inviting participation will be sent to all selected participants via a function on SurveyMonkey. In the email, a link to the online survey will be provided for the participants.

Description of Benefits and Risks

3. Explain the benefits to participants or to others.

The information gleaned from the study will be helpful to the various professional music educator organizations that operate within the state of Nebraska, so that they might plan for additional or better professional growth opportunities for music educators in the state.

4. Explain the risks to participants. What will be done to minimize the risks? If there are no known risks, this should be stated.

There are no known risks associated with this project.

5. Describe the availability of medical or psychological resources that participants might require as a consequence of the research.

NA

6. Will compensation (including money, gift certificates, extra credit, etc.) be provided to participants?

No

7. Informed Consent Process

1. How will informed consent/assent be obtained?

Informed consent information will be in the cover letter email sent to participants. The participants' decision to complete and submit the survey indicates their voluntary decision to participate in the study.

2. Who will conduct the consent interview?

Information will be presented in the cover letter email, sent by the researcher. Should the participants have any questions regarding the informed consent, they will be provided with contact information for the investigator and for the IRB.

3. Who will provide consent or permission?

Participants

4. What is the waiting period, if any, between informing the prospective participant and obtaining consent?

None

5. What steps will be taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence?

Participants will have the option to voluntarily withdraw from the study. No further contact will be made to coerce or unduly influence

6. What is the spoken language used by those obtaining consent?

English

7. What is the language understood by the prospective participant or the legally authorized representative?

English

8. Will any subjects be decisionally impaired so that they may not have the capacity to give consent?

No

9. In certain cases for children over the age of 14, such as UNL students who are 17 or 18, waivers of informed consent can be granted. Would you like to request a waiver of consent?

No

8. Confidentiality & Data

Description of How Confidentiality will be Maintained

1. The research plan should make adequate provisions to maintain the confidentiality of the data. How will confidentiality of records be maintained?

No names are requested. No tracking numbers are used. Individuals will not be identified.

2. Will individuals be identified during data collection or in the results?

No

3. How long will records be kept?

Until the completion of the study.

4. Where will records be stored?

Records be stored on researcher's iDisk on Mobile Me (www.me.com).

5. Who has access to the records/data?

Primary researcher and project supervisor will be the only individuals given access to the records/data.

6. How will data be reported?

Data will be reported in a dissertation.

Monitoring of data to ensure safety

7. Does this research involve more than minimal risk to participants?

No



9. Attachments and Comments

Copies of questionnaires, survey, or testing instruments:

Survey: Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Nebraska Music Educators

Uploaded Attachments:

Survey Understanding Professional Growth.pdf

Cover Letter.pdf

Follow up email #1 to participants.pdf

Follow up email #2 to participants.pdf

General Comments:



December 22, 2010

Phillip Hesterman
School of Music
104 Husker Hall Lincoln, NE 68503

Robert Woody
School of Music
354 WMB, UNL, 68588-0100

IRB Number: 20101211468 EX
Project ID: 11468
Project Title: Understanding Professional Growth Opportunities Utilized by Nebraska Music Educators

Dear Phillip:

This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as Exempt Category 2.

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Final Approval: 12/22/2010. This approval is Valid Until: 02/04/2011.

1. Please include the IRB approval number (IRB# 20101211468 EX) in the email messages. Please email a copy of the messages, with the number included, to irb@unl.edu for our records. If you need to make changes to the message please submit the revised message to the IRB for review and approval prior to using it.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:

- * Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
- * Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
- * Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
- * Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
- * Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the participants or others to the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Freeman, CIP
for the IRB



APPENDIX H

FREE RESPONSE COMMENTARY

A great deal of professional growth opportunities have very little to do with the reality of teaching in a classroom. The professors/teachers who present lack real life experience with what many teachers have to deal with every day. A teacher who has a select choral class has a completely different experience than one who has all students shuffled through their classes.

Also, as far as professional development, in my school district, the policies on funding and reimbursement are in the fine print of the staff handbook. No administrator has ever been intentionally inviting in encouraging staff to ask for district funding for professional development in a whole staff, out in the open sort of way. It is only mentioned briefly in observation conferences. When asking administration even directly for the information on development support, the forms, how to go about getting it, they don't seem to have the time. It would be nice, once every year, if administrators would go over the process, the funding budget particulars, the paperwork, its location and how to file it at a staff meeting. Honestly, most of my professional development has been funded out of my own pocket and has been done on my own weekend time. Yes, my district "supports professional development" and I feel in your survey, given ample credit. Don't you want to know how much teachers personally give of their time and salaries toward it as well? I think you are missing an important piece of the professional development picture.

Professional Development is very important to me and a lack of district support really makes it hard to seek out and complete professional growth. If I am lacking in one area of professional growth, it is mentoring and collaborating with other directors. I would LOVE to see this opportunity more prevalent in music education!

I appreciate seeing teachers of all ages pursuing professional development. I think it speaks highly of them and drive to be the best for their students and themselves.

I believe that the most valuable thing by far that a band director can invest time and money into is learning to play ALL band instruments through private study with specialists on each instrument. All band directors must be able to play not only on a beginning level, but at least at the level of an above-average high school student. Until this is done, I believe that even band directors who are great musicians will have programs and students that are average (at best).

I do wish more professional development would be geared specifically to music. Even the classes I take I have to adapt quite a bit of the information to music. Most of the examples are reading or math that pertains to the regular classroom teacher. I know the teaching skills are similar but would appreciate working with fellow musicians. I learn a lot getting together with our own elementary music staff and sharing ideas.

Professional development is a contact sport! You've got to have contact with someone for a length of time or it doesn't do any good.

I hate to sound negative about professional development, but in my district we have several professional development programs that are forced on us. As a music educator, I understand the value in being aware of student data from state testing, but I would rather be using my professional development time reading about music education than crunching numbers or learning how to improve our district test scores. Our district also has implemented the Whole Faculty Study Group program. The teachers here are predominately negative about this program because they again feel that it is being forced on us so that we can fulfill our professional development requirements. It also takes away from teaching time and has not been well organized in the past few years.

I have really valued my graduate study at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln so far. I would love the opportunity to take summer classes during more than just the first 5-week session.

I would also love to take Kodaly classes through Wesleyan, but they are very expensive and will not contribute to my Master's Degree at this time. For this reason, I have to concentrate on finishing my Masters before taking Kodaly.

I do not value the Orff method as taught in Nebraska. It lacks substance and purposefully ignores/avoids important opportunities to teach real music theory/skills, and concepts. I may take Orff again with different instructors/perspectives.

I hope that experienced teachers will see the value in mentoring and helping new and young teachers so they can continue and be successful in the music ed field in Nebraska.

I strongly believe that if you want to be a better teacher, you will find a way to get the training. I get tired of excuses about lack of time, money, etc. My husband and I are very strapped for cash; he works an entry-level job, and I was part-time for years. We are also adoptive parents, which is not an inexpensive (although extremely valuable!) venture. Through it all, I have been privileged that my husband sees the necessity for me to be a better teacher. I have received all 3 Kodaly levels, attend all local workshops as well as a regional conference every year and national conference almost every year. Again...if you really want to grow as a teacher, you will find a way to make the sacrifices to make it happen.

I work a 60-hour week. I have rehearsal until 9pm, etc. It is hard to get up any enthusiasm for professional development.

I would love to gain some more professional training workshops offered by the district. It would be more practical for our staff development days and directly affect the students learning!

I'd love to get education, but the money constraints prevent me from doing so.

If there are any programs that offer a break on tuition or some sort of assistance to help work on a master's degree I'd really appreciate that information.

In the area in which I live it is extremely difficult to find professional development opportunities specific to music educators. In order to participate in professional development for music educators it becomes very expensive due to the added expenses of travel and lodging.

Lots of classes offered for prof. growth are only oriented toward getting your masters, at this point I would not be doing that and don't need these classes and would much prefer being able to improve teaching, conducting for the classroom but nothing is offered at a reasonable rate for professional growth in NE, so I found something affordable in SD.

Our district is very supportive of professional development. However, once we have exhausted going to workshops to earn "points" it becomes frustrating. Going to more Orff workshops would be very valuable to me, but I have gone over my point allotment in the workshop category. I need to find access to more diverse professional development opportunities to meet my district's requirements.

Our school districts need to be aware of the need for professional growth in the area of music. PG is generally created with regular classroom teachers in mind. Specialists feel like a square peg they are trying to shove into a round hole. Most PG is worthless at the district level unless it has to do with technology.

PD is most effective when it is curricular-specific. There are very few that are not that are effective.

Prior to transferring to a new school, my principal was very supportive of letting me attend our State music convention. My new school would not even pay for a sub for me to attend. I had to take a personal day. If the district provides 2 professional day absences a year, a teacher should be supported in taking them.

Professional development is important but teachers are being forced to take on so many things. At times, teachers would give anything for some extra plan time just to prepare for their day-to-day teaching.

Professional development is offered in my building, by my principal on a weekly basis. While this may not focus on music, many of the discussions can be easily applied to my classroom. Even though I might complain about the number of meetings, I know that I have become a more effective and self-critical teacher in the 3 years I have been in the building. I easily have over 100 hours of professional development each school year.

Professional development is one of the most important parts of teaching, yet the least supported.

Professional development opportunities in LPS could be improved. Often times the required courses don't meet my needs and I don't think there is an ongoing, active attempt to survey teachers about what would be useful. We might be asked once a year, but there is not a group of teachers that is involved on an ongoing basis to survey the needs of the staff, select, organize and implement appropriate sessions.

Often times, speakers and presenters at clinics are presenting novel approaches to teaching which are interesting in the short-term, but don't always have enough depth to last in the long-term.

I believe in the value of P.D., but haven't seen a lot of worthy sessions and opportunities.

Professional growth is always more enjoyable and beneficial when the instructor is engaging and provides for multiple hands on activities. One of the most disappointing presentations I've been to lately was the Key Note speaker at NMEA this year.

Professional growth is very important. For whatever reason, some educators refuse to do it unless it's provided during the school week. I've been very discouraged by that fact. A teacher should always be learning and improving his or her skills and should take initiative to do so.

The district professional growth opportunities for music are deplorable. If I want to grow, I have to do it on my own.

The main thing that I feel the colleges need to do to prepare students to teach, is to give them more student teaching time and spend more time in the class on teaching techniques that will be of a very practical benefit to the teacher as well as the student. I have found that not only do new teachers not have a lot of knowledge about classroom management, but they don't have a lot of technical knowledge about what to tell a trumpet player who is struggling with their breath support or how to help a clarinet player produce a darker and bigger sound in the upper register. These basic things are hard to get covered but are very important to the success of the new teacher.

The professional development provided by the district does not do much in terms of music. Our district professional development is very reading/science/math based and is a waste of my time to attend.

My local and district professional in-service days are not useful, to me, at all.

I believe very strongly in the importance of professional growth, and my district does offer professional growth classes for music. However, I feel that the quality of the classes, and the variety offered is not very strong.

Time is my greatest issue. I do quite a few workshops but I am afraid to commit to a semester long class with homework to complete due to my obligations in my home and all that I do at school. I do not desire a master degree because so many of the classes are not practical in my teaching situation. I prefer to attend workshops and take classes (when I can) that I can use in my small school classroom.

District prof. dev. isn't usually very helpful in the area of music. Outside conferences etc. for music educators are usually very beneficial.